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WAR SPEECHES

BY

BRITISH MINISTERS

1914-1916

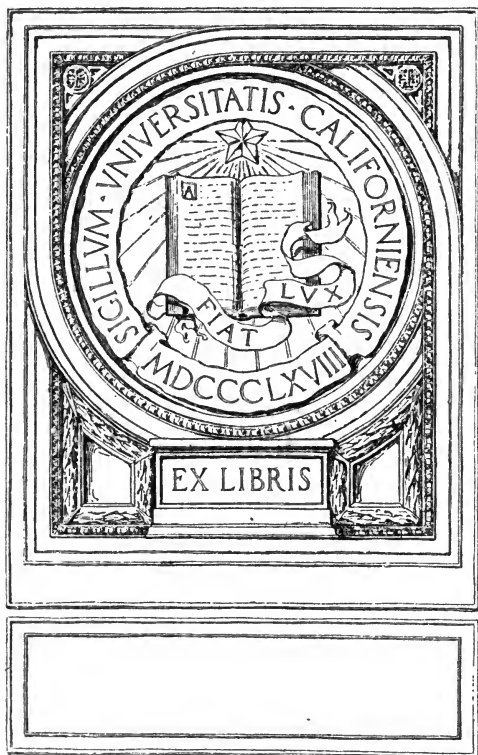
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PREFATORY NOTE.

The speeches and other public statements made during the course of the war by members of the British Government are documents of the first importance. They enunciate the causes which led this country to intervene in a great Continental struggle ; they explain the objects for which the War is being conducted ; they outline the Allies' Peace conditions ; they record the methods by which the country has been governed in these unprecedented times.

This volume gives a picture of the activities of the two Administrations over which Mr. Asquith presided. To the more important speeches of that period have been added the speeches made in December last by Lord Curzon in the House of Lords and Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons, speeches which help to show that the change in the Administration does not imply any change in the principles or the spirit in which the War is being conducted. The inclusion of these speeches brings the selection up to the end of the year 1916.

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Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

In the House of Commons, August 6, 1914

IN asking the House to agree to the Resolution which Mr. Speaker has just read from the Chair, I do not propose, because I do not think it is in any way necessary, to traverse the ground again which was covered by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Sir Edward Grey) two or three nights ago.* He stated—and I do not think any of the statements he made are capable of answer, and certainly have not yet been answered—the grounds upon which, with the utmost reluctance and with infinite regret, His Majesty's Government have been compelled to put this country in a state of war with what for many years and indeed generations past has been a friendly Power. But, Sir, the papers which have since been presented to Parliament, and which are now in the hands of hon. Members, will, I think, show how strenuous, how unremitting, how persistent, even when the last glimmer of hope seemed to have faded away, were the efforts of my right hon. Friend to secure for Europe an honourable and a lasting peace. Everyone knows in the great crisis which occurred last year in the East of Europe, it was largely, if not mainly, by the

* *Vide Page 141.*

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acknowledgment of all Europe due to the steps taken by my right hon. Friend that the area of the conflict was limited, and that, so far as the Great Powers are concerned, peace was maintained. If his efforts upon this occasion have, unhappily, been less successful, I am certain that this House and the country, and I will add posterity and history, will accord to him what is, after all, the best tribute that can be paid to any statesman: that, never derogating for an instant or by an inch from the honour and interests of his own country, he has striven, as few men have striven, to maintain and preserve the greatest interest of all countries—universal peace. These papers which are now in the hands of hon. Members show something more than that. They show what were the terms which were offered to us in exchange for our neutrality. I trust that not only the Members of this House, but all our fellow-subjects everywhere will read the communications, will read, learn, and mark the communications which passed only a week ago to-day between Berlin and London in this matter. The terms by which it was sought to buy our neutrality are contained in the communication made by the German Chancellor to Sir Edward Goschen on July 29, No. 85 of the published Paper. I think I must refer to them for a moment. After referring to the state of things as between Austria and Russia, Sir Edward Goschen goes on:—

“He then proceeded to make the following strong bid for British neutrality. He said that it was clear, so far as he was able to judge the main principle which governed British policy, that Great Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed in any conflict there might be. That, however, was not the object at which Germany aimed. Provided that neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British Government that the Imperial Government”—

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Let the House observe these words—

“aimed at no territorial acquisition at the expense of France should they prove victorious in any war that might ensue.”

Sir Edward Goschen proceeded to put a very pertinent question :—

“I questioned His Excellency about the French Colonies”——

What are the French Colonies? They mean every part of the dominions and possessions of France outside the geographical area of Europe—

“and he said that he was unable to give a similar undertaking in that respect.”

Let me come to what, in my mind personally, has always been the crucial and almost the governing consideration, namely, the position of the small States :—

“As regards Holland, however, His Excellency said that so long as Germany’s adversaries respected the integrity and neutrality of the Netherlands Germany was ready to give His Majesty’s Government an assurance that she would do likewise.”

Then we come to Belgium :—

“It depended upon the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter upon in Belgium, but, when the war was over, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany.”

Let the House observe the distinction between these two cases. In regard to Holland it was not only independence and integrity, but also neutrality; but in regard to Belgium, there was no mention of neutrality at all, nothing but an assurance that, after the War came to an end, the integrity of Belgium would be respected. Then His Excellency added :—

“Ever since he had been Chancellor the object of his policy had been to bring about an understanding with England. He trusted that these assurances”——

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the assurances I have read out to the House—

“might form the basis of that understanding which he so much desired.”

What does that amount to? Let me just ask the House. I do so, not with the object of inflaming passion, certainly not with the object of exciting feeling against Germany, but I do so to vindicate and make clear the position of the British Government in this matter. What did that proposal amount to? In the first place, it meant this: That behind the back of France—they were not made a party to these communications—we should have given, if we had assented to that, a free licence to Germany to annex, in the event of a successful war, the whole of the extra European dominions and possessions of France. What did it mean as regards Belgium? When she addressed, as she has addressed in these last few days, her moving appeal to us to fulfil our solemn guarantee of her neutrality, what reply should we have given? What reply should we have given to that Belgian appeal? We should have been obliged to say that, without her knowledge, we had bartered away to the Power threatening her our obligation to keep our plighted word. The House has read, and the country has read, of course, in the last few hours, the most pathetic appeal addressed by the King of Belgium, and I do not envy the man who can read that appeal with an unmoved heart. Belgians are fighting and losing their lives. What would have been the position of Great Britain to-day, in the face of that spectacle, if we had assented to this infamous proposal? Yes, and what are we to get in return for the betrayal of our friends and the dishonour of our obligations? What are we to get in return? A promise—nothing more; a promise as to what Germany would do in certain eventualities; a promise, be it observed—I am sorry to have to say it, but it must

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be put upon record—given by a Power which was at that very moment announcing its intention to violate its own Treaty and inviting us to do the same. I can only say, if we had dallied or temporised, we, as a Government, should have covered ourselves with dishonour, and we should have betrayed the interests of this country, of which we are trustees. I am glad, and I think the country will be glad, to turn to the reply which my right hon. Friend made, and of which I will read to the House two of the more salient passages. This document, No. 101 of the White Paper, puts on record a week ago the attitude of the British Government, and, as I believe, of the British people. My right hon. Friend says:—

“His Majesty’s Government cannot for a moment entertain the Chancellor’s proposal that they should bind themselves to neutrality on such terms. What he asks us in effect is to engage to stand by while French Colonies are taken if France is beaten, so long as Germany does not take French territory as distinct from the Colonies. From the material point of view”——

My right hon. Friend, as he always does, used very temperate language:—

“such a proposal is unacceptable, for France, without further territory in Europe being taken from her, could be so crushed as to lose her position as a Great Power, and become subordinate to German policy.”

That is the material aspect. But he proceeded:—

“Altogether, apart from that, it would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover. The Chancellor also in effect asks us to bargain away whatever obligation or interest we have as regards the neutrality of Belgium. We could not entertain that bargain either.”

He then says:—

“We must preserve our full freedom to act, as circumstances may seem to us to require.”

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And he added, I think, in sentences which the House will appreciate :—

“ You should . . . add most earnestly that the one way of maintaining the good relations between England and Germany is that they should continue to work together to preserve the peace of Europe. . . . For that object this Government will work in that way with all sincerity and good will.

“ If the peace of Europe can be preserved and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavour will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately. I have desired this and worked for it ”——

The statement was never more true—

“ as far as I could, through the last Balkan crisis, and Germany having a corresponding object, our relations sensibly improved. The idea has hitherto been too Utopian to form the subject of definite proposals, but if this present crisis, so much more acute than any that Europe has gone through for generations, be safely passed, I am hopeful that the relief and reaction which will follow may make possible some more definite *rapprochement* between the Powers than has been possible hitherto.”

That document, in my opinion, states clearly, in temperate and convincing language, the attitude of this Government. Can anyone who reads it fail to appreciate the tone of obvious sincerity and earnestness which underlies it? Can anyone honestly doubt that the Government of this country in spite of great provocation—and I regard the proposals made to us as proposals which we might have thrown aside without consideration and almost without answer—can anyone doubt that in spite of great provocation the right hon. Gentleman, who had already earned the title—and no one ever more deserved it—of Peace Maker of Europe, persisted to the very last moment of the last hour in that beneficent, but unhappily, frustrated purpose?

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I am entitled to say, and I do so on behalf of this country—I speak not for a party, I speak for the country as a whole—that we made every effort any Government could possibly make for peace. But this War has been forced upon us. What is it we are fighting for? Everyone knows, and no one knows better than the Government, the terrible, incalculable suffering—economic, social, personal, and political—which war, and especially a war between the Great Powers of the world, must entail. There is no man amongst us sitting upon this bench in these trying days—more trying perhaps than any body of statesmen for a hundred years have had to pass through—there is not a man amongst us who has not, during the whole of that time, had clearly before his vision the almost unequalled suffering which war, even in a just cause, must bring about, not only to the peoples who are for the moment living in this country and in the other countries of the world, but to posterity and to the whole prospects of European civilisation. Every step we took we took with that vision before our eyes, and with a sense of responsibility which it is impossible to describe. Unhappily, if in spite of all our efforts to keep the peace, and with that full and overpowering consciousness of the result if the issue were decided in favour of war, we have, nevertheless, thought it to be the duty as well as the interest of this country to go to war, the House may be well assured it was because we believe, and I am certain the country will believe, that we are unsheathing our sword in a just cause.

If I am asked what we are fighting for, I reply in two sentences. In the first place to fulfil a solemn international obligation, an obligation which, if it had been entered into between private persons in the ordinary concerns of life, would have been regarded as an obligation not only of law but of honour, which no self-

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respecting man could possibly have repudiated. I say, secondly, we are fighting to vindicate the principle which, in these days when force, material force, sometimes seems to be the dominant influence and factor in the development of mankind, we are fighting to vindicate the principle that small nationalities are not to be crushed, in defiance of international good faith, by the arbitrary will of a strong and overmastering Power. I do not believe any nation ever entered into a great controversy—and this is one of the greatest history will ever know—with a clearer conscience and stronger conviction that it is fighting, not for aggression, not for the maintenance of its own selfish interest, but that it is fighting in defence of principles, the maintenance of which is vital to the civilisation of the world. With a full conviction, not only of the wisdom and justice of our cause, but of the obligations which lay upon us to challenge this great issue, we are entering into the struggle. Let us now make sure that all the resources, not only of this United Kingdom, but of the vast Empire of which it is the centre, shall be thrown into the scale, and it is that this object may be adequately secured that I am now about to ask this Committee—to make the very unusual demand upon it—to give the Government a Vote of Credit of £100,000,000. I am not going, and I am sure the Committee do not wish it, into the technical distinctions between Votes of Credit and Supplementary Estimates and all the rarities and refinements which arise in that connection. There is a much higher point of view than that. If it were necessary, I could justify, upon purely technical grounds, the course we propose to adopt, but I am not going to do so, because I think it would be foreign to the temper and disposition of the Committee. There is one thing to which I do call attention, that is, the Title and Heading of the

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Bill. As a rule, in the past Votes of this kind have been taken simply for Naval and Military operations, but we have thought it right to ask the Committee to give us its confidence in the extension of the traditional area of Votes of Credit so that this money, which we are asking them to allow us to expend may be applied not only for strictly Naval and Military operations, but to assist the food supplies, promote the continuance of trade, industry, business, and communications, whether by means of insurance or indemnity against risk or otherwise, for the relief of distress, and generally for all expenses arising out of the existence of a state of war. I believe the Committee will agree with us that it was wise to extend the area of the Vote of Credit so as to include all these various matters. It gives the Government a free hand. Of course, the Treasury will account for it, and any expenditure that takes place will be subject to the approval of the House. I think it would be a great pity—in fact, a great disaster—if, in a crisis of this magnitude, we were not enabled to make provision—provision far more needed now than it was under the simpler conditions that prevailed in the old days—for all the various ramifications and developments of expenditure which the existence of a state of war between the Great Powers of Europe must entail on any one of them.

I am asking also in my character of Secretary of State for War—a position which I held until this morning—for a Supplementary Estimate for men for the Army. Perhaps the Committee will allow me for a moment just to say on that personal matter that I took upon myself the office of Secretary of State for War under conditions upon which I need not go back, but which are fresh in the minds of everyone, in the hope and with the object that the condition of things in the Army, which all of us deplored, might speedily

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be brought to an end and complete confidence re-established. I believe that is the case; in fact, I know it to be. There is no more loyal and united body, no body in which the spirit and habit of discipline are more deeply ingrained and cherished than in the British Army. Glad as I should have been to continue the work of that office, and I would have done so under normal conditions, it would not be fair to the Army, it would not be just to the country, that any Minister should divide his attention between that Department and another, still less that the First Minister of the Crown, who has to look into the affairs of all Departments, and who is ultimately responsible for the whole policy of the Cabinet, should give, as he could only give, perfunctory attention to the affairs of our Army in a great war. I am very glad to say that a very distinguished soldier and administrator, in the person of Lord Kitchener, with that great public spirit and patriotism that everyone would expect from him, at my request stepped into the breach. Lord Kitchener, as everyone knows, is not a politician. His association with the Government as a Member of the Cabinet for this purpose must not be taken as in any way identifying him with any set of political opinions. He has, at a great public emergency, responded to a great public call, and I am certain he will have with him, in the discharge of one of the most arduous tasks that has ever fallen upon a Minister, the complete confidence of all parties and all opinions.

I am asking on his behalf for the Army, power to increase the number of men of all ranks, in addition to the number already voted, by no less than 500,000. I am certain the Committee will not refuse its sanction, for we are encouraged to ask for it not only by our own sense of the gravity and the necessities of the case, but by the knowledge that India is prepared to send

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us certainly two Divisions, and that every one of our self-governing Dominions, spontaneously and unasked, has already tendered to the utmost limits of their possibilities, both in men and in money, every help they can afford to the Empire in a moment of need. Sir, the Mother Country must set the example, while she responds with gratitude and affection to those filial overtures from the outlying members of her family.

Sir, I will say no more. This is not an occasion for controversial discussion. In all that I have said, I believe I have not gone, either in the statement of our case or in my general description of the provision we think it necessary to make, beyond the strict bounds of truth. It is not my purpose—it is not the purpose of any patriotic man—to inflame feeling, to indulge in rhetoric, to excite international animosities. The occasion is far too grave for that. We have a great duty to perform, we have a great trust to fulfil, and confidently we believe that Parliament and the country will enable us to do it.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

In the House of Commons, August 27, 1914

I BEG to move: "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying Him to convey to His Majesty the King of the Belgians the sympathy and admiration with which this House regards the heroic resistance offered by his army and people to the wanton invasion of his territory, and an assurance of the determination of this Country to support in every way the efforts of Belgium to vindicate her own independence and the public law of Europe."

Very few words are needed to commend to the House the Address, the terms of which will shortly be read from the Chair. The War which is now shaking to its foundations the whole European system originated in a quarrel in which this country had no direct concern. We strove with all our might, as everyone now knows, to prevent its outbreak, and, when that was no longer possible, to limit its area. It is all important, and I think it is relevant to this Motion, that it should be clearly understood when it was and why it was that we intervened. It was only when we were confronted with the choice between keeping and breaking solemn obligations, between the discharge of a binding trust and of shameless subservience to naked force, that we threw away the scabbard. We do not repent our decision. The issue was one which no great and self-respecting

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nation, certainly none bred and nurtured like ourselves, in this ancient home of liberty, could, without undying shame, have declined. We were bound by our obligations, plain and paramount, to assert and maintain the threatened independence of a small and neutral State. Belgium had no interests of her own to serve, save and except the one supreme and overriding interest of every State, great or little, which is worthy of the name, the preservation of her integrity and of her national life.

History tells us that the duty of asserting and maintaining that great principle—which is, after all, the well-spring of civilisation and of progress—has fallen once and again, at the most critical moments in the past, to States relatively small in area and in population, but great in courage and in resolve—to Athens and Sparta, to the Swiss Cantons, and, not least gloriously, three centuries ago, to the Netherlands. Never, Sir, I venture to assert, has the duty been more clearly and bravely acknowledged, and never has it been more strenuously and heroically discharged, than during the last weeks by the Belgian King and the Belgian people. They have faced without flinching, and against almost incalculable odds, the horrors of irruption, of devastation, of spoliation, and of outrage. They have stubbornly withstood, and successfully arrested, the inrush, wave after wave, of a gigantic and overwhelming force. The defence of Liège will always be the theme of one of the most inspiring chapters in the annals of liberty. The Belgians have won for themselves the immortal glory which belongs to a people who prefer freedom to ease, to security, even to life itself. We are proud of their alliance and their friendship. We salute them with respect and with honour. We are with them heart and soul, because by their side and in their company we are defending at the same time

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two great causes—the independence of small States and the sanctity of international covenants. We assure them—as I ask the House in this Address to do—we assure them to-day, in the name of this United Kingdom and of the whole Empire, that they may count to the end on our whole-hearted and unfailing support.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

At the Guildhall, September 4, 1914

MY LORD MAYOR and citizens of London, it is three and a-half years since I last had the honour of addressing in this Hall a gathering of the citizens. We were then meeting, under the presidency of one of your predecessors, men of all creeds and parties, to celebrate and approve the joint declaration of the two great English-speaking States that for the future any differences between them should be settled, if not by agreement, at least by judicial inquiry and arbitration, and never in any circumstances by war. Those of us who hailed that great eirenicon between the United States and ourselves as a landmark on the road of progress were not sanguine enough to think, or even to hope, that the era of war was drawing to a close. But still less were we prepared to anticipate the terrible spectacle which now confronts us—a contest, which for the number and importance of the Powers engaged, the scale of their armaments and armies, the width of the theatre of conflict, the outpouring of blood and loss of life, the incalculable toll of suffering levied upon non-combatants, the material and moral loss accumulating day by day to the higher interests of civilised mankind—a contest which in every one of these aspects is without precedent in the annals of the world. We were very confident three years ago in the rightness of our position when we welcomed

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the new securities for peace. We are equally confident in it to-day, when reluctantly, and against our will, but with clear judgment and a clean conscience, we find ourselves involved with the whole strength of our Empire in this bloody arbitrament between might and right. The issue has passed out of the domain of argument into another field. But let me ask you, and, through you, the world outside, what would have been our condition as a nation to-day, if, through timidity, or through a perverted calculation of self-interest, or through a paralysis of the sense of honour and duty, we had been base enough to be false to our word, and faithless to our friends? Our eyes would have been turned at this moment with those of the whole civilised world to Belgium, a small State which has lived for more than seventy years under a several and collective guarantee, to which we, in common with Prussia and Austria, were parties. We should have seen, at the instance and by the action of two of those guaranteeing Powers, her neutrality violated, her independence strangled, her territory made use of as affording the easiest and most convenient road to a war of unprovoked aggression against France. We, the British people, should at this moment have been standing by, with folded arms and with such countenance as we could command, while this small and unprotected State, in defence of her vital liberties, made a heroic stand against overweening and overwhelming force. We should have been admiring, as detached spectators, the siege of Liège, the steady and manful resistance of a small army, the occupation of Brussels with all its splendid traditions and memories, the gradual forcing back of the patriotic defenders of their Fatherland to the ramparts of Antwerp, countless outrages suffered by them, buccaneering levies exacted from the unoffending civil population, and, finally,

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the greatest crime committed against civilisation and culture since the Thirty Years War, the sack of Louvain, with its buildings, its pictures, its unique library, its unrivalled associations, a shameless holocaust of irreparable treasures, lit up by blind barbarian vengeance. What account could we, the Government and the people of this country, have been able to render to the tribunal of our national conscience and sense of honour, if, in defiance of our plighted and solemn obligations, we had endured, and had not done our best to prevent, yes, to avenge, these intolerable wrongs? For my part, I say that sooner than be a silent witness, which means in effect a willing accomplice, to this tragic triumph of force over law, and of brutality over freedom, I would see this country of ours blotted out of the pages of history.

That is only a phase, a lurid and illuminating phase, in the contest into which we have been called by the mandate of duty and of honour to bear our part. The cynical violation of the neutrality of Belgium was not the whole, but a step, a first step, in a deliberate policy of which, if not the immediate, the ultimate and not far distant aim was to crush the independence and the autonomy of the Free States of Europe. First Belgium, then Holland and Switzerland, countries like our own, imbued and sustained with the spirit of liberty, were, one after another, to be bent to the yoke. And these ambitions were fed and fostered by a body of new doctrine, a new philosophy, preached by professors and learned men. The free and full self-development which, to these small States, to ourselves, to our great and growing Dominions over the seas, to our kinsmen across the Atlantic, is the well-spring and life-breath of national existence, that free self-development is the one capital offence in the code of those who have made force their supreme divinity, and upon its altars they are prepared

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to sacrifice both the garnered fruits and the potential germs of the unfettered human spirit.

I use this language advisedly. This is not merely a material, it is also a spiritual conflict. Upon its issue everything that contains the promise of hope, that leads to emancipation and a fuller liberty for the millions who make up the mass of mankind, will be found sooner or later to depend.

Let me now turn for a moment to the actual situation in Europe. How do we stand? For the last ten years, by what I believe to be happy and well-considered diplomatic arrangements, we have established friendly and increasingly intimate relations with the two Powers, France and Russia, with whom in days gone by we have had, in various parts of the world, occasion for constant friction, and now and again for possible conflict. These new and better relations, based in the first instance upon business principles of give and take, matured into a settled temper of confidence and good will. They were never in any sense or at any time, as I have frequently stated in this Hall, directed against other Powers.

No man in the history of mankind has ever laboured more strenuously or more successfully than my right hon. friend Sir Edward Grey for that which is the supreme interest of the modern world—a general and abiding peace. It is, I venture to think, a very superficial criticism which suggests that under his guidance the policy of this country has ignored, still less that it has counteracted and hampered, the Concert of Europe. It is little more than a year ago when, under the stress and strain of the Balkan crisis, the Ambassadors of the Great Powers met here day after day and week after week, curtailing the area of possible differences, reconciling warring ambitions and aims, and preserving, against almost incalculable odds, the

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general harmony, and it was in the same spirit and with the same purpose when, a few weeks ago, Austria delivered her ultimatum to Serbia, that the Foreign Secretary—for it was he—put forward the proposal for a mediating conference between the four Powers not directly concerned—Germany, France, Italy, and ourselves. If that proposal had been accepted the actual controversy would have been settled with honour to everybody, and the whole of this terrible welter would have been avoided. And with whom does the responsibility rest for its refusal, and for all the illimitable sufferings which now confront the world? One Power, and one Power only, and that Power is Germany. There is the foundation and origin of this world-wide catastrophe. We persevered to the end, and no one who has not been confronted, as we were, with the responsibility, which, unless you had been face to face with it, you could not possibly measure, the responsibility of determining the issues of peace and war—no one who has not been in that position can realise the strength, energy, and persistence with which we laboured for peace. We persevered by every expedient that diplomacy could suggest—straining almost to the breaking-point our most cherished friendships and obligations—even to the last moment making effort upon effort, and indulging hope against hope. Then, and only then, when we were at last compelled to realise that the choice lay between honour and dishonour, between treachery and good faith—when we at last reached the dividing line which makes or mars a nation worthy of the name, it was then only that we declared for War.

Is there anyone in this Hall, or in this United Kingdom, or in the vast Empire of which we here stand in the capital and centre, who blames us or repents our decision? If not, as I believe there is

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not, we must steel ourselves to the task, and, in the spirit which animated our forefathers in their struggle against the dominion of Napoleon, we must, and we shall, persevere to the end.

It would be a criminal mistake to under-estimate either the magnitude, the fighting quality, or the staying power of the forces which are arrayed against us ; but it would be equally foolish, and equally indefensible, to belittle our own resources whether for resistance or for attack. Belgium has shown us by a memorable and glorious example what can be done by a relatively small State when its citizens are animated and fired by the spirit of patriotism.

In France and Russia we have as Allies two of the greatest Powers in the world, engaged with us in a common cause, who do not mean to separate themselves from us any more than we mean to separate ourselves from them. We have upon the seas the strongest and most magnificent Fleet the world has ever seen. The Expeditionary Force which left our shores less than a month ago has never been surpassed, as its glorious achievements in the field have already made clear, not only in material equipment, but in the physical and moral quality of its constituent parts.

As regards the Navy, I am sure my right hon. friend Mr. Churchill, whom we are glad to see here, will tell you there is, happily, little more to be done. I do not flatter it when I say that its superiority is equally marked in every department and sphere of its activity. We rely on it with the most absolute confidence, not only to guard our shores against the possibility of invasion, not only to seal up the gigantic battleships of the enemy in the inglorious seclusion of his own ports, whence from time to time he furtively steals forth to sow the sea with murderous snares, which are more full of menace to neutral ships than to the British Fleet.

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Our Navy does all this, and while it is thirsting, I do not doubt, for that trial of strength in a fair and open fight which has so far been prudently denied it, it does a great deal more. It has hunted the German Mercantile Marine from the high seas. It has kept open our own stores of food supply, and largely curtailed those of the enemy, and when the few German cruisers which still infest the more distant ocean routes have been disposed of—as they will be very soon—it will achieve for British and neutral commerce, passing backwards and forwards, from and to every port of our Empire, a security as complete as it has ever enjoyed in the days of unbroken peace. Let us honour the memory of the gallant seamen who, in the pursuit of one or another of these varied and responsible duties, have already laid down their lives for their country.

In regard to the Army, there is a call for a new, a continuous, a determined, and a united effort. For, as the war goes on, we shall have not merely to replace the wastage caused by casualties, not merely to maintain our military power at its original level, but we must, if we are to play a worthy part, enlarge its scale, increase its numbers, and multiply many times its effectiveness as a fighting instrument. The object of the appeal which I have made to you, my Lord Mayor, and to the other Chief Magistrates of our capital cities, is to impress upon them the imperious urgency of this supreme duty.

Our self-governing Dominions throughout the Empire, without any solicitation on our part, have demonstrated with a spontaneousness and unanimity unparalleled in history their determination to affirm their brotherhood with us, and to make our cause their own.

From Canada, from Australia, from New Zealand, from South Africa, and from Newfoundland, the children of the Empire assert, not as an obligation, but as a

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privilege, their right, and their willingness to contribute money, material, and, what is better than all, the strength and sinews, the fortunes, and lives of their best manhood.

India, too, with not less alacrity, has claimed her share in the common task. Every class and creed, British and native, princes and people, Hindoos and Mohammedans, vie with one another in a noble and emulous rivalry. Two divisions of our magnificent Indian Army are already on their way. We welcome with appreciation and affection their proffered aid, and, in an Empire which knows no distinction of race or class, where all alike, as subjects of the King Emperor, are joint and equal custodians of our common interests and fortunes, we here hail with profound and heartfelt gratitude their association side by side and shoulder to shoulder with our home and Dominion troops, under the flag which is a symbol to all of a unity that the world in arms cannot dis sever or dissolve.

With these inspiring appeals and examples from our fellow-subjects all over the world, what are we doing, and what ought we to do at home? Mobilisation was ordered on August 4. Immediately afterwards Lord Kitchener issued his call for 100,000 recruits for the Regular Army, which has been followed by a second call for another 100,000. The response up to to-day gives us between 250,000 and 300,000 men, and I am glad to say that London has done its share. The total number of Londoners enlisted is not less than 42,000. I need hardly say that the appeal involves no disparagement or discouragement of the Territorial Force. The number of units in that force who have volunteered for foreign service is most satisfactory, and grows every day. We look to them with confidence to increase their numbers, to perfect their organisation in training, and to play the efficient part which has

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always been assigned to them, both offensive and defensive, in the military system of the Empire.

But, to go back to the expansion of the Regular Army, we want more men, men of the best fighting quality, and if for the moment the number who offer—and are accepted—should prove to be in excess of those who can at once be adequately trained and equipped, do not let them doubt that appropriate provision will be made for incorporation of all willing and able men in the fighting forces of the King. We want first of all men, and we shall endeavour to secure that men desiring to serve together shall, wherever possible, be allotted to the same regiment or corps. The raising of battalions by counties or by municipalities with this object will be in every way encouraged, but we want not less urgently a larger supply of ex-non-commissioned officers, the pick of the men who have served their country in the past, and whom, therefore, in most cases we shall be asking to give up regular employment in order that they may return to the work for the State which they alone are competent to do.

The appeal which we make is addressed quite as much to their employers as to the men themselves. They ought surely to be assured of reinstatement in their positions at the end of the War. Finally, there are numbers of commissioned officers now in retirement with large experience of handling troops, who have served their country in the past. Let them come forward, too, and show their willingness, if need be, to train bodies of men, for whom for the moment no regular cadres or units can be found. I have little more to say."

As to the actual progress of the War I will not say anything except that, in my judgment, in whatever direction we look, there is abundant ground for pride and for confidence.

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I say nothing more, because I think we should bear in mind, all of us, that we are at present watching the fluctuations of fortune only in the early stages of what is going to be a protracted struggle. We must learn to take long views and to cultivate above all other qualities those of patience, endurance, and steadfastness. Meanwhile, let us go, each one of us, to his or her appropriate part in the great common task.

Never had a people more or richer sources of encouragement and inspiration. Let us realise, first of all, that we are fighting as a United Empire, in a cause worthy of the highest traditions of our race. Let us keep in mind the patient and indomitable seamen who never relax for a moment, night or day, their stern vigil on the lonely seas. Let us keep in mind our gallant troops, who to-day, after a fortnight's continuous fighting under conditions which would try the mettle of the best army that ever took the field, maintain not only an undefeated but an unbroken front.

Finally, let us recall the memories of the great men and the great deeds of the past, commemorated some of them in the monuments which we see around us on these walls, not forgetting the dying message of the younger Pitt—his last public utterance, made at the table of your predecessor, my Lord Mayor, in this very Hall: "England has saved herself by her exertions and will, as I trust, save Europe by her example." The England of those days gave a noble answer to his appeal, and did not sheath the sword until, after nearly twenty years of fighting, the freedom of Europe was secured. Let us go and do likewise.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

At Edinburgh, September 18, 1914

A FORTNIGHT ago to-day, in the Guildhall of the City of London, I endeavoured to present to the nation and to the world the reasons which have compelled us, the people of all others who have the greatest interest in the maintenance of peace, to engage in the hazards and the horrors of war. I do not wish to repeat to-night in any detail what I then said. The War has arisen immediately and ostensibly, as everyone knows, out of a dispute between Austria and Serbia, in which we in this country had no direct concern. The diplomatic history of those critical weeks—the last fortnight in July and the first few days of August—is now accessible to all the world. It has been supplemented during the last few days by the admirable and exhaustive dispatch of our late Ambassador at Vienna, Sir Maurice de Bunsen—a dispatch which I trust everybody will read, and no one who reads it can doubt that largely through the efforts of my right hon. friend and colleague, Sir Edward Grey, the conditions of a peaceful settlement of the actual controversy were already within sight when on July 31 Germany, by her own deliberate act, made war a certainty.

The facts are incontrovertible. They are not sought to be controverted, except, indeed, by the invention and circulation of such wanton falsehoods as that France

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was contemplating and even commencing the violation of Belgian territory as a first step on her road to Germany. The result is that we are at war, and we are at war—as I have already shown elsewhere, and as I repeat here to-night—for three reasons. In the first place, to vindicate the sanctity of treaty obligations and of what is properly called the public law of Europe ; in the second place, to assert and to enforce the independence of free States, relatively small and weak, against encroachment and violence by the strong ; and in the third place, to withstand, as we believe in the best interests not only of our own Empire, but of civilisation at large, the arrogant claim of a single Power to dominate the development of the destinies of Europe.

Since I last spoke some faint attempts have been made in Germany to dispute the accuracy and the sincerity of this statement of our attitude and aim. It has been suggested, for instance, that our professed zeal for treaty rights and for the interests of small States is a new-born and simulated passion. What, we are asked, has Great Britain cared in the past for treaties or for the smaller nationalities, except when she had some ulterior and selfish purpose of her own to serve ? I am quite ready to meet that challenge, and to meet it in the only way in which it could be met, by reference to history ; and out of many illustrations which I might take I will content myself with two, widely removed in point of time, but both, as it happens, very apposite to the present case. I will go back first to the war carried on at first against the revolutionary Government of France, and then against Napoleon, which broke out in 1793 and which lasted for more than twenty years. We had then at the head of the Government in this country one of the most peace-loving Ministers who has ever presided over our

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fortunes, Mr. Pitt. For three years, from 1789 to 1792, he resolutely refused to interfere in any way with the revolutionary proceedings in France, or in the wars that sprang out of them, and as late, I think, as February in 1792, in a memorable speech in the House of Commons, which shows amongst other things the shortness of human foresight, he declared that there never was a time when we in this country could more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace. And what was it that, within a few months of that declaration, led this pacific Minister to war? It was the invasion of the treaty rights, guaranteed by ourselves, of a small European State—the then States General of Holland.

For nearly 200 years the Great Powers of Europe had guaranteed to Holland the exclusive navigation of the River Scheldt. The French revolutionary Government invaded what is now Belgium, and as a first act of hostility to Holland declared the navigation of the Scheldt to be open. Our interest in that matter then, as now, was relatively small and insignificant. But what was Mr. Pitt's reply? I quote you the exact words he used in the House of Commons; they are so applicable to the circumstances of the present moment. This is in 1793:

“England will never consent that another country should arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure the political system of Europe established by solemn treaties and guaranteed by the consent of the Powers.”

He went on to say that “If this House—the House of Commons—means substantial good faith to its engagements, if it retains a just sense of the solemn faith of treaties, it must show a determination to support them.” And it was in consequence of that stubborn and unyielding determination to maintain treaties, to defend small States, to resist the aggressive domination of a single Power, that we were involved

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in a war, which we had done everything to avoid, and which was carried on upon a scale both as to area and as to duration up to then unexampled in the history of mankind.

That is one precedent. Let me give you one more. I come down to 1870, when this very Treaty to which we are parties no less than Germany, and which guarantees the integrity and independence of Belgium, was threatened. Mr. Gladstone was then Prime Minister of this country, and he was, if possible, a stronger and more ardent advocate of peace even than Mr. Pitt himself. Mr. Gladstone, pacific as he was, felt so strongly the sanctity of our obligations that—though here again we had no direct interest of any kind at stake—he made agreements with France and Prussia to co-operate with either of the belligerents if the other violated Belgian territory. I should like to read a passage from a speech ten years later, delivered in 1880 by Mr. Gladstone himself in this city of Edinburgh, in which he reviewed that transaction and explained his reasons for it.

After narrating the facts which I have summarised, he said this: “If we had gone to war”—which he was prepared to do—“we should have gone to war for freedom. We should have gone to war for public right, we should have gone to war to save human happiness from being invaded by a tyrannous and lawless Power. That,” Mr. Gladstone said, “is what I call a good cause, gentlemen. And though I detest war, and there are no epithets too strong, if you will supply me with them, that I will not endeavour to heap upon its head; in such a war as that, while the breath in my body is continued to me, I am ready to engage.”

So much for our own action in the past in regard to treaties and small States. But, faint as is this denial of this part of our case, it becomes fainter still,

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it dissolves into the thinnest of thin air, when it has to deal with our contention that we and our Allies are withstanding a Power whose aim is nothing less than the domination of Europe. It is, indeed, the avowed belief of the leaders of German thought, I will not say of the German people, but of those who for many years past have controlled German policy, that such a domination, carrying with it the supremacy of what they call German culture and the German spirit, is the best thing that could happen to the world.

Let me, then, ask for a moment what is this German culture? What is this German spirit of which the Emperor's armies are at present the missionaries in Belgium and in France? Mankind owes much to Germany, a very great debt for the contributions she has made to philosophy, to science, and to the arts, but that which is specifically German in the movement of the world in the last thirty years has been, on the intellectual side, the development of the doctrine of the supreme and ultimate prerogative in human affairs of material force, and on the practical side the taking of the foremost place in the fabrication and the multiplication of the machinery of destruction. To the men who have adopted this gospel, who believe that power is the be all and end all of a State, naturally a treaty is nothing more than a piece of parchment, and all the old world talk about the rights of the weak and the obligations of the strong is only so much thread-bare and nauseating cant.

One very remarkable feature of this new school of doctrine, whatever be its intellectual or its ethical merits, is that it has turned out, as an actual code for life, to be a very purblind philosophy.

For German culture and the German spirit did not save the Emperor and his people from delusions and miscalculations as dangerous as they were absurd in

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regard to the British Empire. We were believed by these cultivated observers to be the decadent descendants of a people who, by a combination of luck and of fraud, had managed to obtain dominion over a vast quantity of the surface and the populations of the globe. This fortuitous aggregation which goes by the name of the British Empire was supposed to be so insecurely founded, and so loosely knit together, that, at the first touch of serious menace from without, it would fall to pieces and tumble to the ground. Our great Dominions were getting heartily tired of the Imperial connection. India, it was notorious to every German traveller, was on the verge of open revolt, and here at home we, the people of this United Kingdom, were riven by dissension so deep and so fierce that our energies, whether for resistance or for attack, would be completely paralysed. What a fantastic dream! And what a rude awakening! And in this vast and grotesque, and yet tragic, miscalculation is to be found one of the roots, perhaps the main root, of the present War.

But let us go one step more. It has been said "By their fruits ye shall know them," and history will record that, when the die was cast and the struggle began, it was the disciples of that same creed who revived methods of warfare which have for centuries past been condemned by the common sense, as well as by the humanity, of the great mass of the civilised world.

Louvain, Malines, Termonde. These are names which will henceforth be branded on the brow of German culture. The ruthless sacking of the ancient and famous towns of Belgium is fitly supplemented by the story that reaches us only to-day from our own Headquarters in France, of the proclamation issued less than a week ago by the German authorities, who were for a moment, and, happily, for little more than a moment, in occupation of the venerable city of

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Reims. Let me read, for it should be put on record, the concluding paragraph of the proclamation :

“With a view to securing adequately the safety of the troops, and to instil calm into the population of Reims, the persons named below [81 in number, and including all the leading citizens of the town] have been seized as hostages by the Commander-in-Chief of the German Army. These hostages will be hanged at the slightest attempt at disorder. Also the town will be totally or partially burned and the inhabitants will be hanged for any infraction of the above.

“By order of German authorities.”

Do not let it be forgotten that it is from a Power whose intellectual leaders are imbued with the ideal that I have described, and whose generals in the field sanction and even direct these practices—it is from that Power that the claim proceeds to impose its culture, its spirit—which means its domination—upon the rest of Europe. That is a claim, I say to you, to all my fellow-countrymen, to every citizen and subject of the British Empire whose ears and eyes my words can reach—that is a claim that everything that is great in our past, and everything that promises hope or progress in our future, summons us to resist to the end. The task—do not let us deceive ourselves—the task will not be a light one. Its full accomplishment—and nothing short of full accomplishment is worthy of our traditions or will satisfy our resolve—will certainly take months, it may even take years. I have come here to-night, not to ask you to count the cost, for no price can be too high to pay when honour and freedom are at stake, but to put before you, as I have tried to do, the magnitude of the issue and the supreme necessity that lies upon us as a nation, nay, as a brotherhood and family of nations, to rise to its heights and acquit ourselves of our duty.

The War has now lasted more than six weeks. Our supremacy at sea has not been seriously questioned.

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Full supplies of food and of raw materials are making their way to our shores from every quarter of the globe. Our industries, with one or two exceptions, maintain their activities. Unemployment is so far not seriously in excess of the average. The monetary situation has improved, and every effort that the zeal and the skill of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the co-operation and expert advice of the bankers and business men of the country, can devise—every effort is being made to achieve what is most essential—the complete re-establishment of the foreign exchanges. Meanwhile, the merchant shipping of the enemy has been hunted from the seas, and our seamen are still, patiently or impatiently, waiting a chance to try conclusions with the opposing Fleet. Great and incalculable is the debt which we have owed during these weeks, and which in increasing measure we shall continue to owe, to our Navy. The Navy needs no help, and as the months roll on—thanks to a far-sighted policy in the past—its proportionate strength will grow.

If we turn to our Army we can say with equal justice and pride that, during these weeks, it has revived the most glorious records of its past. Sir John French and his gallant officers and men live in our hearts, as they will live in the memories of those who come afterwards. But splendid achievements such as these—equally splendid in retirement and in advance—cannot be won without a heavy expenditure of life and limb, of equipment, and supplies. Even now, at this very early stage, I suppose there is hardly a person here who is not suffering from anxiety and suspense. Some of us are plunged in sorrow for the loss of those we love, cut off, some of them, in the springtide of their young lives. We will not mourn for them overmuch.

“One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.”

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But these gaps have to be filled. The wastage of modern war is relentless and almost inconceivable. We have—I mean His Majesty's Government have—since the War began dispatched to the front already considerably over 200,000 men, and the amplest provision has been made for keeping them supplied with all that was necessary in food, in stores, and in equipment. They will very soon be reinforced by Regular troops from India, from Egypt, and the Mediterranean, and in due time by the contingents which our Dominions are furnishing with such magnificent patriotism and liberality. We have with us here our own gallant Territorials, becoming every day a fitter and a finer force, eager and anxious to respond to any call, either at home or abroad, that may be made upon them.

But that is not enough. We must do still more. Already in little more than a month we have half a million recruits for the four new Armies which, as Lord Kitchener told the country yesterday, he means to have ready to bring into the field. Enlisting as we were last week in a single day as many men as we have been accustomed to enlist in the course of a whole year, it is not, I think, surprising that the machinery has been overstrained, and there have been many cases of temporary inconvenience and hardship and discomfort. With time and patience and good organisation these things will be set right, and the new scale of allowances which was announced in Parliament yesterday will do much to mitigate the lot of wives and children and dependents who are left behind. We want more men, and perhaps most of all help for training them. Every one in the whole of this kingdom who has in days gone by, as officer or as non-commissioned officer, served his country never had a greater or a more fruitful opportunity of service than is presented to him to-day.

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We appeal to the manhood of the three kingdoms. To such an appeal I know well, coming from your senior representative in the House of Commons, that Scotland will not turn a deaf ear. Scotland is doing well, and indeed more than well, and no part of Scotland, I believe, in proportion better than Edinburgh. I cannot say with what pleasure I heard the figures given out by the Lord Provost, and those which have been supplied to me by the gallant general who has the Scottish Command, which show, indeed, as we expected, that Scotland is more than holding her own.

In that connection let me repeat what I said two weeks ago in London. We think it of the highest importance that, as far as possible and subject to the accidents of war, people belonging to the same place, breathing the same atmosphere, having the same associations, should be kept together.

I have only one word more to say. What is it that we can offer to our recruits? They come to us spontaneously, under no kind of compulsion, of their own free will, to meet a national and an Imperial need; we present to them no material inducement in the shape either of bounty or bribe, and they have to face the prospect of a spell of hard training from which most of the comforts and all the luxuries that many of them have been accustomed to are rigorously banished. But then, when they are fully equipped for their patriotic task, they will have the opportunity of striking a blow, it may be even of laying down their lives, not to serve the cause of ambition or aggression, but to maintain the honour and the good faith of our country, to shield the independence of free States, to protect against brute force the principles of civilisation and the liberties of Europe.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

At Dublin, September 25, 1914

SOME weeks ago I took it upon myself to suggest to the four principal Magistrates of the United Kingdom that they should afford me an opportunity of making a personal appeal to their citizens at a great moment in our national history. I have already delivered my message in London and in Edinburgh. To the first of those great communities I was able to speak as an Englishman by birth and as a Londoner by early association and long residence. To the second, the capital of the Ancient Kingdom of Scotland, I had special credentials as having been for the best part of thirty years one of their representatives in the House of Commons, and now indeed, by one of the melancholy privileges of time, the senior among the Scottish members. But to-night, when I come to Dublin, I can put forward neither the one claim nor the other. I base my title, such as it is, to your hospitality and your hearing upon such service as during the whole of my political life I have tried, with a whole heart and to the best of my faculty and opportunities, to render to Ireland. I come here not as a partisan, not even as a politician, but as, for the time being, the head of the King's Government, to summon Ireland, a loyal and patriotic Ireland, to take her place in the defence of our common cause.

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It is no part of my mission to-night—it is indeed at this time of day wholly unnecessary—to justify, still less to excuse, the part that the Government of the United Kingdom has taken in this supreme crisis in our national affairs. There have been wars in the past in regard to which there has been among us diversity of opinion, uneasiness as to the wisdom of our diplomacy, anxiety as to the expediency of our policy, doubts as to the essential righteousness of our cause. That is not the case to-day. Even in the memorable struggle which we waged a hundred years ago against the domination of Napoleon there was always a minority, respectable not merely in number, but in the sincerity and in the eminence of its adherents, which broke the front of our national unity. Again I say that is not the case to-day. We feel as a nation—or rather, I ought to say, speaking here and looking round upon our vast Empire in every quarter of the globe, as a family of nations—without distinction of creed or party, of race or climate, of class or section, that we are united in defending principles and in maintaining interests which are vital, not only to the British Empire, but to all that is worth having in our common civilisation, and all that is worth hoping for in the future progress of mankind.

What better or higher cause, whether we succeed or fail, and we are going not to fail but to succeed, what higher cause can arouse and enlist the best energies of a free people than to be engaged at one and the same time in the vindication of international good faith, the protection of the weak against the violence of the strong, and in the assertion of the best ideals of all the free communities in all the ages of time and in every part of the world against the encroachments of those who believe, and who preach, and who practise the religion of force?

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It is not—I am sure you will agree with me—it is not necessary to demonstrate once more that of this War Germany is the real and the responsible author. The proofs are patent, manifold, and overwhelming. Indeed, on the part of Germany herself we get upon this point, if denial at all, a denial only of the faintest and the most formal kind. For a generation past she has been preparing the ground, equipping herself both by land and sea, fortifying herself with alliances, what is perhaps even more important, teaching her youth to seek and to pursue as the first and the most important of all human things the supremacy of German power and the German spirit; and all that time biding her opportunity. Many of the great wars of history have been almost accidentally brought on. There was nothing in the quarrel, such as it was, between Austria and Serbia that could not, and would not, have been settled by pacific means. But in the judgment of those who guide and control German policy the hour had come to strike the blow that had been long and deliberately prepared. In their hands lay the choice between peace and war, and their election was for war. In so deciding, as everybody now knows, Germany made two profound miscalculations, both of them natural enough in men who had come to believe that in international matters everything can be explained and measured in terms of material force.

What were those mistakes? The first was that Belgium, a small and prosperous country, entirely disinterested in European quarrels, guaranteed by the joint and several compact of the Great Powers, would not resent, and certainly would not resist, the use of her territory as a high road for an invading German force into France. How could they imagine that this little country, rather than allow her neutrality to be violated and her independence insulted and menaced, was prepared that her fields should be drenched with the blood of her soldiers,

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her towns and villages devastated by marauders, her splendid heritage of monuments and of treasures, built up for her by the piety, art, and learning of the past, ruthlessly laid in ruins? The passionate attachment of a numerically small population to the bit of territory, which looks so little upon the map, the pride and unconquerable devotion of a free people to their own free State—these were things which apparently had never been dreamed of in the philosophy of Potsdam.

Rarely in history has there been a greater material disparity between the invaders and the invaded. But the moral disparity was at least equally great, for the indomitable resistance of the Belgians did more than change the whole face of the campaign. It proved to the world that ideas which cannot be weighed or measured by any material calculus can still inspire and dominate mankind. That is the reason why the whole sympathy of the civilised world at this moment is going out to these small States—Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro—that have played so worthy a part in this historic struggle.

But Germany was guilty of another and a still more capital blunder in relation to ourselves. I am not referring for the moment to the grotesque misunderstanding upon which I dwelt a week ago at Edinburgh—their carefully fostered belief that we here were so rent with civil distraction, so paralysed by lukewarmness or disaffection in our Dominions and Dependencies, that if it came to fighting we might be brushed aside as an impotent and even a negligible factor. The German misconception went even deeper than that. They asked themselves what interest, direct or material, had the United Kingdom in this conflict. Could any nation, least of all the cold, calculating, phlegmatic, egotistic British nation, embark upon a costly and bloody contest from which it had nothing in the way

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of profit to expect? They forgot that we, like the Belgians, had something at stake which cannot be translated into what one of our poets had called "the lore of nicely calculated less or more."

What was it we had at stake? First and foremost, the fulfilment to a small and relatively weak country of our plighted word, and, behind and beyond that, the maintenance of the whole system of international good faith, which is the moral bond of the civilised world. Here again they were wrong in thinking that the reign of ideas, old world ideas like those of duty and good faith, had been superseded by the ascendancy of force. War is at all times a hideous thing; at the best an evil to be chosen in preference to worse evils, and at the worst little better than the letting loose of hell upon earth. The Prophet of old spoke of the "confused noise of battle and garments rolled in blood," but in these modern days, with the gigantic scale of the opposing armies and the scientific developments of the instruments of destruction, war has become an infinitely more devastating thing than it ever was before. The hope that the general recognition of a humaner code would soften or abate some of its worst brutalities has been rudely dispelled by the events of the last few weeks. The German invasion of Belgium and France contributes indeed some of the blackest pages to its sombre annals. Rarely has a non-combatant population suffered more severely, and rarely, if ever, have the monuments of piety and of learning and of those sentiments of religious and national association of which they are the permanent embodiment, even in the worst times of the most ruthless warriors, been so shamefully and cynically desecrated; and behind the actual theatre of conflict, with its smoke and its carnage, there are the sufferings of those who are left behind, the waste of wealth, the economic dislocation, the heritage—the long heritage—

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of enmities and misunderstanding which war brings in its train.

Why do I dwell upon these things? It is to say this—that great as is the responsibility of those who allow their country—as we have done—to be drawn into such a welter, there is one thing much worse than to take such a responsibility, and that is, upon a fitting occasion, to shirk it. Our record in the matter is clear. We strove up to the last moment for peace, and only when we were satisfied that the price of peace was the betrayal of other countries, and the dishonour and degradation of our own, did we take up the sword.

I should like, beyond this inquiry into causes and motives, to ask your attention and that of my fellow-countrymen to the end which, in this War, we ought to keep in view. Forty-four years ago, at the time of the war of 1870, Mr. Gladstone used these words. He said: “The greatest triumph of our time will be the enthronement of the idea of public right as the governing idea of European politics.” Nearly fifty years have passed. Little progress, it seems, has as yet been made towards that great and beneficent change, but it seems to me to be now at this moment as good a definition as we can have of our European policy. The idea of public right—what does it mean when translated into concrete terms? It means, first and foremost, the clearing of the ground by the definite repudiation of militarism as the governing factor in the relation of States and of the future moulding of the European world. It means, next, that room must be found and kept for the independent existence and the free development of the smaller nationalities, each with a corporate consciousness of its own. Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, Greece, and the Balkan States—they must be recognised as having exactly as good a title as their more powerful neighbours—

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more powerful in strength and in wealth—to a place in the sun. And it means finally, or it ought to mean, perhaps by a slow and gradual process, the substitution for force, for the clash of competing ambitions, for groupings and alliances and a precarious equipoise, of a real European partnership based on the recognition of equal rights, and established and enforced by a common will. A year ago that would have sounded like a Utopian idea. It is probably one that may not, or will not, be realised either to-day or to-morrow, but if and when this War is decided in favour of the Allies it will at once come within the range, and before long within the grasp, of European statesmanship.

I go back for a moment to the peculiar aspects of the actual case upon which I have dwelt, because it seems to me that they ought to make a special appeal to the people of Ireland. Ireland is a loyal country, and she would, I know, respond with alacrity to any summons which called upon her to take her share in the assertion and the defence of our common interests. But the issues raised by this War are of such a kind that, unless I mistake her people and misrepresent her history, they touch a vibrating chord both in her imagination and in her conscience. How can you Irishmen be deaf to the cry of the smaller nationalities to help them in their struggle for freedom, whether, as in the case of Belgium, in maintaining what she has won, or, as in the case of Poland or the Balkan States, in regaining what they have lost or in acquiring and putting upon a stable foundation what has never been fully theirs? How, again, can you Irishmen, if I understand you, sit by in cool detachment and with folded arms while we, in company of our gallant Allies of France and Russia, are opposing a world-wide resistance to pretensions which threaten to paralyse and sterilise the progress and the best destinies of mankind?

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During the last few weeks Sir John French and his heroic forces have worthily sustained our cause. The casualties have been heavy—Ireland has had her share. But although they have been increased during the last week from the ranks of our gallant Navy by one of the hazards of warfare at sea, of those who have fallen in both services we may ask how could men die better? They have left behind them an example and an appeal. From all quarters of the Empire its best manhood is flowing in. The first Indian Contingent is, I believe, landing to-day at Marseilles, and in all the ports of our great Dominions the convoys are already mustering.

Over half a million recruits have joined the colours here at home, and I come to ask you in Ireland, though you do not need my asking, to take your part. There was a time when, through the operations of laws which everyone now acknowledges to have been both unjust and impolitic, the martial spirit and capacity for which Irishmen have always been conspicuous found its chief outlet in the alien armies of the Continent. I have seen it computed—I do not know whether with precise accuracy—but I have seen it computed upon good authority that in the first fifty years of the eighteenth century, when the penal laws were here in full swing, nearly half a million Irishmen enlisted under the banners of the Empire of France and of Spain. We at home in the United Kingdom suffered a double loss, for, not only were we drained year by year of some of our best fighting material, but over and over again we found ourselves engaged in battle array, suffering from and inflicting deadly losses upon those who might have been, and under happier conditions would have been, fellow soldiers of our own. The British Empire has always been proud, and with reason, of Irish regiments and their Irish leaders, and was never prouder of them than it is to-day. We ask you here in Ireland to give us more,

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to give them without stinting. We ask Ireland to give of her sons the most in number, the best in quality, that a proud and loyal daughter of the Empire ought to devote to the common cause. The conditions seem to me to be exceptionally favourable for the purpose. We have of late been witnessing here in Ireland a spontaneous enrolment and organisation in all parts of the country of bodies of volunteers. I say nothing—for I wish to-night to avoid trespassing upon even a square inch of controversial ground—I say nothing of the causes or motives which brought them originally into existence, and have fostered their growth and strength. I will only say—and this is my nearest approach to politics to-night—that there are two things which to my mind have become unthinkable. The first is that one section of Irishmen are going to fight another, and the second is that Great Britain is going to fight either.

Speaking here in Dublin, I may perhaps address myself for a moment particularly to the National Volunteers, and I am going to ask them all over Ireland—not only them, but I make the appeal to them particularly—to contribute with promptitude and enthusiasm a large and worthy contingent of recruits to the second new Army of half a million which is growing up, as it were, out of the ground. I should like to see, and we all want to see, an Irish Brigade, or, better still, an Irish Army Corps. Do not let them be afraid that by joining the colours they will lose their identity and become absorbed in some invertebrate mass, or, what is perhaps equally repugnant, be artificially redistributed in units which have no national cohesion or character. We wish, to the utmost limit that military exigencies will allow, that men who have been already associated in this or that district in training and in common exercises should be

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kept together and continue to recognise the corporate bond which now unites them. And of one thing further I am sure. We are in urgent need of competent officers, and if officers now engaged in training these men prove equal to the test there is no fear that their services will not be gladly and gratefully retained.

But, I repeat, the Empire needs recruits, needs them at once, that they may be fully trained and equipped in time to take their part in what may well be the decisive fields of the greatest struggle in the history of the world. That is our immediate necessity, and no Irishman in responding to it need be afraid that he is prejudicing the future of the Volunteers. I do not say, and I cannot say, under what precise form or organisation, but I trust and believe, and indeed I am certain, that the Volunteers will become a permanent part, an integral and a characteristic part, of the defensive forces of the Crown.

If our need is great, your opportunity is also great. The call which I am making is, as you know well, backed by the sympathy of your fellow-Irishmen in all parts of the Empire and the world. Old animosities between us are dead, scattered like the autumn leaves to the four winds of heaven. We are a united nation, owing and paying to our Sovereign the heartfelt allegiance of men who at home love and enjoy for themselves the liberty which our soldiers and our sailors are fighting, by land and by sea, to maintain and to extend for others. There is no question of compulsion or bribery. What we want, we believe you are ready and eager to give—the free-will offering of a free people.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

At Cardiff, October 2, 1914

IN the course of the last month I have addressed meetings in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, and now, in the completion of the task which I set myself, and which the kindness of our great municipalities has allowed me to perform, I have come to Cardiff. England, Scotland, and Ireland have each of them a definite and a well-established capital city, but I have always understood that there was some doubt where the capital of the Principality of Wales was to be found on the map. Wales is a single and indivisible entity with a life of its own, drawing its vitality from an ancient past, and both, I believe, in the volume and in the reality of its activity never more virile than it is to-day. But I do not know that there is any general agreement amongst Welshmen as to where their capital is situated, and without attempting as an outsider to differentiate or to reconcile competing claims, I stand here to-night in what I believe to be a safe coign of vantage under the hospitality and the authority of the Lord Mayor of Cardiff.

Though I am not a stranger to Wales, you may nevertheless ask why I have requested your permission to address this great audience here to-night. I am not altogether an idle man, and during the last two months I can honestly say that there has hardly been a day, indeed there have been very few hours, which have **not** been preoccupied with grave cares and responsibility.

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But throughout them all I have been, and I am, sustained by a profound and unshakable belief in the righteousness of our cause, and by overwhelming evidence that in the pursuit and the maintenance of that cause the Government have behind them, without distinction of race, of party, or of class, the whole moral and material support of the British Empire. Let me take the opportunity to acknowledge and to welcome the calm, reasoned, and dignified statement of our case which the Christian Churches of the United Kingdom, through some of their most distinguished leaders and ministers, have this week presented to the world.

I will not repeat, and I certainly cannot improve upon it, and indeed I am not here to-night to argue out propositions which British citizens in every part of the world to-day regard as beyond the reach of controversy. I do not suppose that in the history of mankind there has ever been in such a vast and diverse community agreement so unanimous in purpose, so concentrated, a corporate conscience so clear, so convinced, co-operation so spontaneous, so ardent, and so resolute. Just consider what it means, here in this United Kingdom—England, Scotland, Ire and, and Wales—to hear one plain, harmonious, united voice, while over the seas from our great Dominions Canada, Austral a, South Africa, New Zealand, our Crown Colonies, swell the chorus.

✓ In India—where whatever we won by the sword we hold and we retain by the more splendid title of just and disinterested rule, by the authority, not of a despot, but of a trustee, the response to our common appeal has moved all our feelings to their profoundest depths, and has been such as to shiver and to shatter the vain and ignorant imaginings of our enemies. "That is a remarkable and indeed a unique spectacle.

What is it that stirred the imagination, aroused the conscience, enlisted the manhood, welded into one

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compact and irresistible force the energies and the will of the greatest Imperial structure that the world has ever known? That is a question which, for a moment, it is well worth asking and answering. Let me say, then, first negatively, that we are not impelled, any of us, by some of the motives which have occasioned the bloody struggles of the past. In this case, so far as we are concerned, ambition and aggression play no part. What do we want? What do we aim at? What have we to gain?

We are a great, world-wide, peace-loving partnership.—By the wisdom and the courage of our forefathers, by great deeds of heroism and adventure on land and sea, by the insight and corporate sagacity, the tried and tested experience of many generations, we have built up a dominion which is buttressed by the two pillars of Liberty and Law. We are not vain enough or foolish enough to think that in the course of a long process there have not been blunders, or worse than blunders, and that to-day our Dominion does not fall short of what in our ideals it might and it ought and, we believe, it is destined to be. But such as we have received it, and such as we hope to leave it, with it we are content.

We do not covet any people's territory. We have no desire to impose our rule upon alien populations. The British Empire is enough for us. All that we wished for, all that we wish for now, is to be allowed peaceably to consolidate our own resources, to raise within the Empire the level of common opportunity, to draw closer the bond of affection and confidence between its parts, and to make it everywhere the worthy home of the best traditions of British liberty. Does it not follow from that, that nowhere in the world is there a people who have stronger motives to avoid war and to seek and ensue peace? Why, then, are the British people throughout the length and breadth of our Empire everywhere turning their

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ploughshares into swords? Why are the best of our able-bodied men leaving the fields and the factory and the counting-house for the recruiting office and the training camp?

If, as I have said, we have no desire to add to our Imperial burdens, either in area or in responsibility, it is equally true that in entering this War we had no ill will to gratify, nor wrongs of our own to avenge. In regard to Germany in particular, our policy—repeatedly stated in Parliament, resolutely pursued year after year both in London and in Berlin—our policy has been to remove one by one the outstanding causes of possible friction, and so to establish a firm basis for cordial relations in the days to come.

We have said from the first—I have said it over and over again, and so has Sir Edward Grey—we have said from the first that our friendships with certain Powers, with France, with Russia, and with Japan, were not to be construed as implying cold feelings, and still less hostile purposes, against any other Power. But at the same time we have always made it clear, to quote words used by Sir Edward Grey as far back as November, 1911—I quote his exact words—"One does not make new friendships worth having by deserting old ones. New friendships by all means let us have, but not at the expense of the ones we have." That has been, and I trust will always be, the attitude of those whom the Kaiser in his now notorious proclamation describes as the "treacherous English."

We laid down—and I wish to call not only your attention but the attention of the whole world to this, when so many false legends are now being invented and circulated—in the following year—in the year 1912 we laid down in terms carefully approved by the Cabinet, and which I will textually quote, what our relations with Germany ought in our view to be. We said, and we

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communicated this to the German Government—
“ Britain declares that she will neither make, nor join in, any unprovoked attack upon Germany. Aggression upon Germany is not the subject, and forms no part, of any treaty, understanding, or combination to which Britain is now a party, nor will she become a party to anything that has such an object.” There is nothing ambiguous or equivocal about that.

But that was not enough for German statesmanship. They wanted us to go further. They asked us to pledge ourselves absolutely to neutrality in the event of Germany being engaged in war, and this, mind you, at a time when Germany was enormously increasing both her aggressive and her defensive resources, especially upon the sea. They asked us, to put it quite plainly, for a free hand, so far as we were concerned, when they selected the opportunity to overbear, to dominate the European world.

To such a demand but one answer was possible, and that was the answer we gave. None the less we have continued during the whole of the last two years, and never more energetically and more successfully than during the Balkan crisis of last year, to work not only for the peace of Europe but for the creation of a better international atmosphere and a more cordial co-operation between all the Powers. From both points of view, that of our domestic interests as a kingdom and an Empire, and that of our settled attitude and policy in the counsels of Europe, a War such as this, which injures the one and frustrates the other, was and could only be regarded as among the worst of catastrophes—among the worst of catastrophes, but not the worst.

Four weeks ago, speaking at the Guildhall, in the City of London, when the War was still in its early days, I asked my fellow-countrymen with what countenance, with what conscience, had we basely chosen to stand

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aloof, we could have watched from day to day the terrible unrolling of events—public faith shamelessly broken, the freedom of a small people trodden in the dust, the wanton invasion of Belgium and then of France, by hordes who leave behind them at every stage of their progress a dismal trail of savagery, of devastation, and of desecration worthy of the blackest annals in the history of barbarism? That was four weeks ago. The War has now lasted for 60 days, and every one of those days has added to the picture its share of sombre and repulsive traits. We now see clearly written down in letters of carnage and spoliation the real aims and methods of this long-prepared and well-organised scheme against the liberties of Europe.

I say nothing of other countries. I pass no judgment upon them. But if we here in Great Britain had abstained and remained neutral, forsworn our word, deserted our friends, faltered and compromised with the plain dictates of our duty—nay, if we had not shown ourselves ready to strike with all our forces at the common enemy of civilisation and freedom, there would have been nothing left for our country but to veil her face in shame and to be ready in her turn—for her turn would have come—to share the doom which she would have richly deserved, and after centuries of glorious life to go down to her grave “unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.”

Let us gladly acknowledge what becomes clearer and clearer every day, that the world is just as ready as it ever was, and no part of it readier than the British Empire, to understand and to respond to moral issues. The new school of German thought has been teaching for a generation past that in the affairs of nations there is no code of ethics. According to their doctrine force and nothing but force is the test and the measure of right. As the events which are going on before our eyes

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have made it plain, they have succeeded only too well in indoctrinating with their creed—I will not say the people of Germany—like Burke, I will not attempt to draw up an indictment against a nation—I will not say the people of Germany, but those who control and execute German policy.

But it is one of those products of German genius which, whether or not it was intended exclusively for home consumption, has not, I am happy to say, found a market abroad, and certainly not within the boundaries of the British Empire. We still believe here, old-fashioned people as we are, in the sanctity of treaties, that the weak have rights and that the strong have duties, that small nationalities have every bit as good a title as large ones to life and independence, and that freedom for its own sake is as well worth fighting for to-day as it ever was in the past. And we look forward at the end of this War to a Europe in which these great simple and venerable truths will be recognised and safeguarded for ever against the recrudescence of the era of blood and iron. Stated in a few words that is the reason for our united front, the reason that has brought our Gallant Indian warriors to Marseilles, that is extracting from our most distant Dominions the best of their manhood, that in the course of two months has transformed the United Kingdom into a vast recruiting ground.

Now I have come here to-night not to talk, but to do business. Before I sit down I want to say to you a few practical words. We are confronted, as you all know and recognise, by the greatest emergency in our history. Every part of the United Kingdom, and every man and every woman in every part of it, is called upon to make his or her contribution, and to do his or her share, and our primary business is to fill the ranks. There is, I find, in some quarters an apprehension that the recruiting for the New Army, and the functions to be assigned to

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that Army when it is formed and trained, may interfere with, or may in some way belittle or disparage the Territorial Force. Believe me, no delusion could be more mischievous or more complete.

No praise could be too high for the patriotic and sustained efforts of the county associations or for the quality and efficiency of the Territorial troops. It is a comparatively easy thing to make great efforts and sacrifices under the stress and strain, which we are now experiencing, of a supreme crisis. The Territorials, without any such stimulus, in the piping times of peace, when war and the sufferings and the struggles and the glories of war were contingent and remote, these men gave their time, sacrificed their leisure—not only in their annual training, but in thousands of cases both officers and men devoted their spare hours—to preparing themselves in the study and the practice of the art of war. They have now been embodied for two months, and I am expressing the considered opinion of one of the most eminent generals when I say that the divisions now in camp in various parts of the country, and improving every day in efficiency, have completely justified their title to play any part that may be assigned to them, either in home defence, in the manning of our garrisons, or in the battle lines at the front.

It is then no want of appreciation of the patriotism and of the efficiency of the Territorial Forces that leads me to ask you to-night for recruits for the Regular Army. We wish, so far as military exigencies permit, that the new battalions and squadrons and batteries should retain their local associations and their corporate and distinctive national character. Why, the freedom and the autonomy of the smaller nationalities is one of the great issues of this gigantic contest.

I went a week ago to Dublin to make an appeal to Ireland. I asked Irishmen then, as I do now, on behalf

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of the Government and of the War Office, to enlist in and to make up the complement of an Irish Army Corps. I repeat that appeal to-night to the men of Wales. We want that. We want you to fill up the ranks of the Welsh Army Corps. We believe that the preservation of local and national ties, of the genius of a people, which has a history of its own, is not only not hostile to or inconsistent with, but, on the contrary, fosters and strengthens and stimulates the spirit of a common purpose, of a corporate brotherhood, of an underlying and binding Imperial unity throughout every section and among all ranks of the forces of the Crown.

Men of Wales, of whom I see so many thousands in this splendid gathering, let me say one last word to you. Remember your past. Think of the valleys and the mountains which in old days were the shelter and the recruiting ground of your fathers in the struggles which adorn and glorify your annals. Never has a stronger or a more compelling appeal been made to all that you as a nation honour and hold true. Be worthy of those who went before you and leave to your children the richest of all inheritances, the memory of fathers who in a great cause put self-sacrifice before ease, and honour above life itself.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

At the Guildhall, November 9, 1914

THIS is the seventh year in succession it has been my privilege as the head of the Government to respond at this board to the toast of his Majesty's Ministers. During that time, not only our own country, but the world outside, has experienced many and strange vicissitudes. It is, I think, not inappropriate that I should go back for a moment to the first of those years, the month of November, 1908, and recall what was then the European situation. It presented two new features, startling and arresting at the moment, and the true significance of both of which it has been left for time to unfold. The first was the formal annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina—an attempt, to which, I remember, I then called attention, to vary an international arrangement without the consent of the contracting parties. Advantage was taken by one of the Great Powers, the Slavonic States of the Balkan Peninsula being still unprepared for common action, and Russia, our ally, still suffering for the moment from the exhaustion of a great war, with the connivance of another Great Power, to ride roughshod over the weaker nationalities, and to set aside the public law of Europe. That, in my opinion, was the first in order of time—but not the first in order of importance—of the causes which have led to the present War.

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The other change in the European situation was the sudden emergence in the Ottoman Empire of what was called the party of the Young Turks. They had brought about a bloodless revolution, they had deposed the Sultan Abdul Hamid, whose devastating tyranny, I remember very well, was denounced in this very hall, ten years or more before, by Lord Salisbury. At that time, November, 1908, as the spokesman of the British nation I took the opportunity to congratulate them—the Young Turks—on what as we all believed and hoped the establishment of freedom and Constitutional Government in the Ottoman Empire.

Never were hopes, so sanguinely entertained and so confidently expressed, doomed to bitterer and more complete disappointment. But after six years' experience we have reluctantly to admit that the Young Turk has reproduced the vices without either the vigour or the versatility of the old régime. When this War began three months ago we made it clear, in conjunction with our Allies, to the Turkish Government that if they remained neutral their Empire should not suffer in integrity or in authority. The statesmen of that unhappy party, sharply divided in opinion, vacillating in counsel from day to day, allowed their true interests to be undermined and overborne by German threats, by German ships, by German gold. They were tempted to one futile outrage after another; first the lawless bombardment of a Russian open port, then the equally lawless intrusion into Egyptian territory, until the Allies—Russia, France, and ourselves—who had withstood with unexampled patience a protracted series of flouts and veiled menaces, of impudent equivocations, were compelled to yield to the logic of facts and to recognise Turkey as an open enemy.

I wish to make it clear, not only to my fellow-countrymen, but to the world outside, that this is not our doing.

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It is in spite of our hopes and efforts, and against our wills. It is not the Turkish people—it is the Ottoman Government—that has drawn the sword, and which, I venture to predict, will perish by the sword. It is they and not we who have rung the death-knell of Ottoman dominion, not only in Europe, but in Asia. With their disappearance will disappear, as I, at least, hope and believe, the blight which for generations past has withered some of the fairest regions of the earth. We have no quarrel with Mussulman subjects of the Sultan. Our Sovereign claims among the most loyal of his subjects millions of men who hold the Mohammedan faith. Nothing is further from our thoughts or intentions than to initiate or encourage a crusade against their belief. Their Holy Places we are prepared, if any such need should arise, to defend against all invaders and to maintain inviolate. The Turkish Empire has committed suicide.

The attention of the country has been naturally and mainly concentrated upon the field of war, but I think it may not be unfitting if for one or two minutes, finding myself here face to face with the bankers and merchants of the City of London, I refer to the steps which we have taken to prevent the dislocation of trade and to preserve the national credit. I leave on one side the machinery which we set up for insuring war risks on ships and cargoes and the successful action of my right hon. friend and colleague, Mr. McKenna, and his committee in regard to the provision of sugar and food supplies. But let me just for a minute recall to you here the threatening aspect of the financial world in the last week of July. The stock markets were demoralised, the Stock Exchange had closed its doors, bankers were apprehensive of a wholesale withdrawal of deposits and the great accepting house of the City of London had to face the prospect of being unable to obtain from abroad

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the remittances which they required to meet their daily maturing obligations in respect to bills of exchange. We were confronted at that moment with a double risk—the risk of a shortage of internal and of a general dislocation of international currency. By the end of the first week in August both those dangers had been coped with, first by the issue of currency notes, and, secondly, by providing for the reacceptance of current bills of exchange. There followed the Moratorium for all debts with certain exceptions, which has since been extended from one month to two. These measures, sanctioned and approved as they were by Parliament, prevented the destruction of the machinery of commerce; but we proceeded to take the necessary steps to restart its working. Arrangements were come to with the Bank of England for discounting postponed bills, and with that Bank and the other great joint stock banks for dealing with new bills; provision was made to enable the accepters of pre-Moratorium bills to meet them when they became payable, and schemes have since been devised for dealing both with the position of the Stock Exchange and of merchants and manufacturers who had foreign obligations. What has been the result of the measures so taken by his Majesty's Government? I think it is a very satisfactory one. The foreign exchanges are working in the case of most countries quite satisfactorily, and the gold reserves at the Bank of England, which were forty millions on July 22 and which had fallen on August 7 to twenty-seven millions, now stand at the unprecedented figure of sixty-nine and a-half millions. The central gold reserve of the country after three months of the War amounts to £80,000,000, almost exactly twice the amount at which it stood at the beginning of the crisis. The Bank rate, which rose, as you know, to 10 per cent., has now come down to 5, a figure, I think, not in excess of that at which it stood

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this time last year. Food prices have been kept at a fairly normal level, and although trade has been curtailed in some directions unemployment has been rather below than above the average.

I desire to say in that connection that, while the Government have done their part, they owe much more than I can easily tell to the co-operation of leading members of the Opposition and of the bankers, merchants, and traders of the City of London ; and I desire in that connection to mention two names and two names only, because they are the names of men who are entirely outside the current of our political controversies. The first is that of my noble and learned friend Lord Reading, the Lord Chief Justice of England, without whom, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer would tell you, these satisfactory arrangements could not possibly have been made. He has devoted three months of valuable time day by day to assisting the Government in the prosecution and completion of their plans.

The other name is that of the Governor of the Bank of England, Mr. Walter Cunliffe, who in time of great emergency has shown the utmost courage and resource ; and it gives me great pleasure, with the King's permission, to be able to announce to you to-night that in recognition of these great services in an acute national crisis his Majesty has been pleased to confer upon Mr. Cunliffe the dignity of a peer of the United Kingdom.

I have thought it right to recount those practical, if prosaic, measures which the Government have taken here at home. But I am not without fear that the success which has attended them may have had counter-vailing disadvantages. The truth is, as I think both my colleagues who have spoken for the Navy and the Army have already indicated, that, apart from our darkened streets at night and the preponderance of khaki-clad men by day, there is little that is abnormal

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in the external conditions of our national daily life. The din of conflict, the sight of ruin and devastation, the long agony of the daily and nightly struggle among the bursting shells in the trenches, the patient and anxious vigil of our seamen beset by the mine and the submarine—all these things, the terrible actualities of modern warfare, only come to us by report; except indeed when they are brought home more closely and more acutely, by the maiming or the death of those whom we love. Nothing can be worse for a nation than either to win or to lose battles in a struggle such as this vicariously and as it were by deputy. We do well not to be moved unduly either to exultation or to despondency by the fluctuating fortunes of the campaign. This is going to be a long-drawn struggle, and whether at this moment or at that fortune smiles or frowns upon our arms we cannot do better than to cultivate and to practise, after the fashion of our forefathers, the temper of equanimity. There is certainly nothing in the warfare of this hundred days to damp our hopes, to depress our confidence, to impair our resolve. Our enemies have tried in turn three separate objectives—Paris, Warsaw, Calais. From each in turn they have retired baulked and frustrated by the invincible steadfastness and valour of the Allies. But that is not enough.

We shall never sheath the sword, which we have not lightly drawn, until Belgium recovers in full measure all and more than all that she has sacrificed, until France is adequately secured against the menace of aggression, until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed upon an unassailable foundation, and until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed. That is a great task worthy of a great nation. It needs for its accomplishment that every man among us, old or young, rich or poor, busy or leisurely, learned or simple, should give what he has and do what he can.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

In the House of Commons, March 1, 1915

AT the outbreak of the War the ordinary Supply on a peace basis had been voted by the House, and consequently the Votes of Credit for the now current financial year, like those on all previous occasions, have been taken in order to provide the amounts necessary for Naval and Military operations in addition to the ordinary Grants of Parliament. It consequently follows that the expenditure charged or chargeable to Votes of Credit for this financial year represents, broadly speaking, the difference between the expenditure of the country on a peace footing and that expenditure upon a war footing. The total on that basis, if this Supplementary Vote is assented to, will be £362,000,000.

For reasons the validity of which the Committee has recognised on previous occasions I do not think it desirable to give the precise details of the items which make up the total; but without entering into that, I may roughly apportion the expenditure. For the Army and the Navy, according to the best Estimates which can at present be framed, out of the total given there will be required approximately £275,000,000. That is also in addition, as I have already pointed out, to the sum voted before the War for the Army and Navy, which amounted in the aggregate to a little over £80,000,000. That leaves unaccounted for a

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balance of £87,000,000, of which approximately £38,000,000 represents advances for war expenditure made, or being made, to the self-governing Dominions, Crown Colonies, and Protectorates. In addition to that sum of £38,000,000, there has been an advance to Belgium of £10,000,000, and to Serbia of £800,000. Further advances to these Allies are under consideration, the details of which it is not possible yet to make public. The balance of, roughly, £38,000,000 is required for miscellaneous services covered by the Vote of Credit which have not yet been separately specified.

I think the Committee will be interested to know what the actual cost of the War will have been to this country, as far as we can estimate, on March 31, the close of the financial year. The war will then have lasted 240 days, and the Votes of Credit up to that time, assuming this Vote is carried, will amount to £362,000,000. It may be said, speaking generally, that the average expenditure from Votes of Credit will have been, roughly, £1,500,000 per day throughout the time. That, of course, is the excess due to the War over the expenditure on a peace footing. That represents the immediate charge to the taxpayers of this country for this year. But, as the Committee know, a portion of the expenditure consists of advances for the purpose of assisting or securing the food supplies of this country, and will be recoverable in whole, or to a very large extent, in the near future. A further portion represents advances to the Dominions and to other States which will be ultimately repaid. If these items are excluded from the account the average per day of the War is slightly lower; but, after making full allowance for all the items which are in the nature of recoverable loans, the daily expenditure does not work out at less than £1,200,000. I have spoken of the average: these figures are the average taken over

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the whole period from the outbreak of War; but at the outbreak of War, after the initial expenditure on mobilisation had been incurred, the daily expenditure was considerably below the average, as many charges had not yet matured. The expenditure has risen steadily and is now well over the daily average that I have given. To that figure must be added, in order to give a complete account of the matter, something for war services other than Naval or Military. At the beginning of the year these charges were not likely to be very considerable, but it will probably be within the mark to say that on April 1 we shall be spending over £1,700,000 a day above the normal in consequence of the War.

Perhaps I may now say something concerning the Vote of Credit for the ensuing year, which amounts to £250,000,000. This Vote of Credit has two features which I believe are quite unique and without precedent. In the first place, it is the largest single Vote on record in the annals of this House; and secondly, it provides for the ordinary as well as for the emergency expenditure of the Army and the Navy. The House may ask on what principle or basis has this sum of £250,000,000 been arrived at? Of course it is difficult, and indeed impossible, to give any exact estimate, but as regards the period, so far as we can forecast it, for which this Vote is being taken, it has been thought advisable to take a sum sufficient, so far as we can judge, to provide for all the expenditure which will come in course of payment up to, approximately, the second week in July—that is to say, a little over three months; or, to put it in another way, something like one hundred days of War expenditure. As regards the daily rate of expenditure—I have dealt hitherto with the expenditure up to March 31—the War Office calculate that at the beginning of April, 1915, the total expen-

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diture on Army services will be at the rate of one and a-half millions per day—with a tendency to increase. The total expenditure on the Navy at the commencement of April will, it is calculated, amount to about £400,000 per day. The aggregate expenditure of the Army and Navy services at the beginning of 1915-16 is put at £1,900,000 per day—with a tendency to increase; for the purposes of our Estimate the figures we have taken indicate a level two millions per day. The Committee will remember—I am not sure whether I mentioned the figure—that on a peace footing the daily expenditure of the Army and the Navy, on the basis of the Estimates approved last year, was about £220,000 per day. The difference, therefore, between £2,000,000 and £220,000 represents what we estimate to be the increased expenditure due to the War during the one hundred days for which we are now providing.

There are other items belonging to the same category as those to which I have already referred in dealing with the Supplementary Vote. With regard to advances to our own Dominions and other States for which provision has also had to be made, the balance of the total of £250,000,000 for which we are now asking beyond the actual estimated expenditure for the Army and the Navy will be applied to those and kindred emergency purposes.

Before I pass from the purely monetary aspect of the matter, it may be interesting to the Committee to be reminded of what has been our expenditure upon the great wars of the past. In the Great War, which lasted for over twenty years, from 1793 to 1815, the total cost, as estimated by the best authorities, was £831,000,000. The Crimean War may be put down, taking everything into account, at £70,000,000. The total cost of the war charges in South Africa from 1899 to March 31, 1903, was estimated, in a Return

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presented to Parliament, at £211,000,000. These are instructive figures.

In presenting these two Votes of Credit the Government are making a large pecuniary demand on the House—a demand which in itself is beyond comparison larger than has ever been made in the House of Commons by any British Minister in the whole course of our history. We make it with the full conviction that, after seven months of War the country and the whole Empire are every whit as determined as they were at the outset—if need be at the cost of all we can command both in men and in money—to bring a righteous cause to a triumphant issue. There is much in what we see to encourage and to stimulate us. Nothing has shaken, and nothing can shake, our faith in the unbroken spirit of Belgium, in the undefeated heroism of indomitable Serbia, in the tenacity and resource with which our two great Allies—one in the West and the other in the East—hold their far-flung lines, and will continue to hold them till the hour comes for an irresistible and decisive advance. Our own Dominions and our great Dependency of India have sent us splendid contributions of men, a large number of whom are already at the front, and before very long, in one or another of the actual theatres of War, the whole of them will be in the fighting line. We hear to-day with great gratification that Princess Patricia's Canadian Regiment has been doing, during these last few days, most gallant and efficient service.

We have no reason to be otherwise than satisfied with the progress of recruiting here at home. Territorial divisions, now fully trained, are capable—I say it advisedly—of confronting any troops in the world. The New Armies, which have lately been under the critical scrutiny of skilled observers, are fast realising all our most sanguine hopes. A

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War carried on upon this gigantic scale, and under conditions for which there is no example in history, is not always or every day a picturesque or spectacular affair. Its operations are of necessity, in appearance, slow and dragging. Without entering into strategic details, I can assure the Committee that, with all the knowledge and experience which we have now gained, His Majesty's Government have never been more confident than they are to-day of the power as well as the will of the Allies to achieve ultimate and durable victory.

I will not enter in further detail into what I may call the general military situation, but I should, for a few moments, like to call the attention of the Committee to one or two aspects of the War which of late have come prominently into view. I will refer to the operations which are now in progress in the Dardanelles. It is a good rule in war to concentrate your forces on the main theatre, and not to dissipate them in disconnected and sporadic adventures, however promising they may appear to be. That consideration, I need hardly say, has not been lost sight of in the counsels of the Allies. There has been, and there will be, no denudation or impairment of the forces which are at work in France and Flanders, and both the French and ourselves will continue to give them the fullest and, we believe, the most effective support.

Nor—what is equally important—has there, for the purpose of these operations, been any weakening of the Grand Fleet. The enterprise which is now going on, and so far has gone on in a manner which reflects, as the House will agree, the highest credit on all concerned, was carefully considered and conceived with very distinct and definite objects—political, strategic, and economic. Some of these objects are so obvious as not to need statement, and others are of such a character

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that it is perhaps better for the moment not to state them. But I should like to advert for a moment, without any attempt to forecast the future, to two features in this matter. The first is, that it once more indicates and illustrates the close co-operation of the Allies—in this case the French and ourselves—in a new theatre, and under somewhat dissimilar conditions to those which have hitherto prevailed. We welcome the presence of the splendid contingent from the French Navy that our Allies have supplied, and which is sharing to the full in both the hazards and the glories of the enterprise.

The other point on which, I think, it is worth dwelling for a moment is that this operation shows in a very significant way the copiousness and the variety of our own Naval resources. In order to illustrate that remark take the names of the ships which have been actually mentioned in the dispatches we have published. First the "Queen Elizabeth," the first ship to be commissioned of the newest type of what are called "super-Dreadnoughts," with guns of a power and a range never hitherto known in naval warfare. Side by side with her is the "Agamemnon," the immediate predecessor of the "Dreadnought," and in association with them are the "Triumph," "Cornwallis," "Irresistible," "Vengeance," and "Albion," representing, I think I am right in saying, three or four different types of the older "pre-Dreadnought" battleships, which have been so foolishly and so prematurely regarded in some quarters as obsolete or negligible, all bringing to bear the power of their formidable 12-in. guns on the fortifications with magnificent accuracy and with deadly effect. When, as I have said, these proceedings are being conducted, so far as the Navy is concerned, without subtraction of any sort or kind from the strength or effectiveness of the Grand Fleet, I think a word of congratulation

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is due to the Admiralty for the way in which it has utilised its resources.

I pass from that to another new factor in these military and naval operations—the so-called German blockade of our coast. I shall have to use some very plain language. I may, perhaps, preface what I have to say by the observation that it does not come upon us as a surprise. This War began on the part of Germany with the cynical repudiation of a solemn Treaty on the avowed ground that, when a nation's interests require it, right and good faith must give way to force. The War has been carried on on their part with a systematic—not an impulsive or a casual—but a systematic violation of all the conventions and practices by which international agreement had sought to mitigate and regularise the clash of arms. She has now—I will not say reached the climax, for we do not know what may yet be to come—but she has taken a further step, without any precedent in history, by mobilising and organising, not on the surface, but under the surface of the sea, a campaign of piracy and pillage. Are we—can we—and here I address myself for the moment to the neutral countries of the world—are we to sit quiet, or can we sit quiet, as though we were still under the protection of the restraining rules and the humanising usages of civilised war? We think we cannot. The enemy, borrowing what I may, perhaps, call for this purpose a neutral flag from the vocabulary of diplomacy, describes this newly adopted measure by a grotesque and puerile perversion of language as a blockade. What is a blockade? A blockade consists in sealing up the war ports of a belligerent against sea-borne traffic, by encircling their coast with an impenetrable ring of ships of war. Where are these ships of war? Where is the German Navy? What has become of those gigantic battleships and cruisers on which so many millions of money have been

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spent, and in which such vast hopes and ambitions have been invested? I think, if my memory serves me, they have only twice during the course of these seven months been seen upon the open sea. Their object in both cases was the same—murder and mutilation of civilians, and the wholesale destruction of property in undefended seaside towns, and on each occasion when they caught sight of the approach of a British force they showed a clean pair of heels, and hurried back at the top of their speed to the safe seclusion of their minefields and their closely guarded forts. Some of them suffered on the way. The plain truth is, the German Fleet is not blockading, cannot blockade, and never will blockade our coasts. I propose now to read to the Committee the Statement which has been prepared by His Majesty's Government, and which will be public property to-morrow, which declares, I hope in sufficiently plain and unmistakable terms, the view which we take, not only of our rights, but of our duties. It is not very long, and I think I had better read it textually.

“Germany has declared that the English Channel, the north and west coasts of France, and the waters round the British Isles are a ‘war area,’ and has officially notified that ‘all enemy ships found in that area will be destroyed, and that neutral vessels may be exposed to danger.’ This is in effect a claim to torpedo at sight, without regard to the safety of the crew or passengers, any merchant vessel under any flag. As it is not in the power of the German Admiralty to maintain any surface craft in these waters, this attack can only be delivered by submarine agency. The law and custom of nations in regard to attacks on commerce have always presumed that the first duty of the captor of a merchant vessel is to bring it before a Prize Court, where it may be tried, where the regularity of the capture may be challenged, and where neutrals may recover their cargoes. The sinking of prizes is in itself a questionable act, to be resorted to only in extraordinary circumstances and after provision has been made for the safety of all the crew or passengers (if there are passengers on board). The responsibility for discriminating

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between neutral and enemy vessels, and between neutral and enemy cargo, obviously rests with the attacking ship, whose duty it is to verify the status and character of the vessel and cargo, and to preserve all papers before sinking or even capturing it. So also is the humane duty of providing for the safety of the crews of merchant vessels, whether neutral or enemy, an obligation upon every belligerent. It is upon this basis that all previous discussions of the law for regulating warfare at sea have proceeded.

"A German submarine, however, fulfils none of these obligations. She enjoys no local command of the waters in which she operates. She does not take her captures within the jurisdiction of a Prize Court. She carries no prize crew which she can put on board a prize. She uses no effective means of discriminating between a neutral and an enemy vessel. She does not receive on board for safety the crew of the vessel she sinks. Her methods of warfare are therefore entirely outside the scope of any of the international instruments regulating operations against commerce in time of war. The German declaration substitutes indiscriminate destruction for regulated capture.

"Germany is adopting these methods against peaceful traders and non-combatant crews with the avowed object of preventing commodities of all kinds (including food for the civil population) from reaching or leaving the British Isles or Northern France. Her opponents are, therefore, driven to frame retaliatory measures in order in their turn to prevent commodities of any kind from reaching or leaving Germany. These measures will, however, be enforced by the British and French Governments without risk to neutral ships or to neutral or non-combatant life, and in strict observance of the dictates of humanity.

"The British and French Governments will therefore hold themselves free to detain and take into port ships carrying goods of presumed enemy destination, ownership, or origin. It is not intended to confiscate such vessels or cargoes unless they would otherwise be liable to condemnation.

"The treatment of vessels and cargoes which have sailed before this date will not be affected."

That, Sir, is our reply. I may say, before I comment upon it, with regard to the suggestion which I see is put forward from a German quarter that we have rejected some proposal or suggestion made to the

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two Powers by the United States Government, I do not say anything more than that it is quite untrue. On the contrary, all we have said to the United States so far is, that we are taking it into careful consideration in consultation with our Allies.

Now, the Committee will have observed, from the statement I have just read out of the retaliatory measures we propose to adopt, the words "blockade" and "contraband," and other technical terms of international law, do not occur, and advisedly so. In dealing with an opponent who has openly repudiated all the principles, both of law and of humanity, we are not going to allow our efforts to be strangled in a network of juridical niceties. We do *not* intend to put into operation any measures which we do not think to be effective, and I need not say we shall carefully avoid any measures which violate the rules either of humanity or of honesty. Subject to those two conditions I say to our enemy—I say it on behalf of the Government, and I hope on behalf of the House of Commons—that under existing conditions there is no form of economic pressure to which we do not consider ourselves entitled to resort. If, as a consequence, neutrals suffer inconvenience and loss of trade we regret it, but we beg them to remember that this phase of the war was not initiated by us. We do not propose either to assassinate their seamen or to destroy their goods, and what we are doing we do solely in self-defence. If, again, as is possible, hardship is caused to the civil and non-combatant population of the enemy by the cutting off of supplies, we are not doing more in this respect than was done in the days when Germany still acknowledged the authority of the law of nations, sanctioned by the practice of the first and the greatest of her Chancellors, and by the express declarations of his successor. We

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are quite prepared to submit to the arbitrament of neutral opinion and still more to the verdict of impartial history in this war that, in the circumstances in which we have been placed, we have been moderate and restrained, we have abstained from things which we were provoked and tempted to do, and we have adopted the policy which recommends itself to reason, common sense, and to justice.

This new aspect of the War only serves to illustrate and to emphasise the truth that the gravity and the magnitude of the task we have undertaken does not diminish, but increases, as the months go by. The call for men to join our fighting forces, which is our primary need, has been, and is, being nobly responded to here at home and throughout the Empire. That call, we say with all plainness and directness, was never more urgent or more imperious than to-day. But this is a War not only of men, but of material. Take only one illustration. The expenditure of ammunition on both sides has been on a scale and at a rate which is not only without precedent, but is far in excess of any expert forecast. At such a time patriotism has cast a heavy burden on the shoulders of all who are engaged in trades or manufactures which, directly or indirectly, minister to the equipment of our forces. It is a burden, let me add, which falls, or ought to fall, with even weight on both employers and employed. Differences as to remuneration or as to profit, or as to hours and conditions of labour, which in ordinary times might well justify a temporary cessation of work, should no longer be allowed to do so. The first duty of all concerned is to go on producing with might and main what the safety of the State requires, and, if this is done, I can say with perfect confidence the Government on its part will ensure a prompt and equitable settlement of disputed points,

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and, in cases of proved necessity, will give, on behalf of the State, such help as is in their power.

Sailors and soldiers, employers and workmen in the industrial world, are all at this moment partners and co-operators in one great enterprise. The men in the shipyards and the engineering shops, the workers in the textile factories, the miner who sends the coal to the surface, the dockyard labourer who helps to load and unload the ships, and those who employ and organise and supervise their labours, are one and all rendering to their country a service as vital and as indispensable as the gallant men who line the trenches in Flanders or in France, or who are bombarding fortresses in the Dardanelles. I hear sometimes whispers, hardly more than whispers, of possible terms of peace. Peace is the greatest of all human blessings, but this is not the time to talk of peace. Those who talk of peace, however excellent their intentions, are, in my judgment, victims, I will not say of wanton, but of grievous self-delusion. It is like the twittering of sparrows in the stress and tumult of a tempest which is shaking the foundations of the earth. The time to talk of peace is when the great tasks in which we and our Allies embarked on this long and stormy voyage are within sight of accomplishment. Speaking at the Guildhall at the Lord Mayor's Banquet last November, I used this language, which has since been repeated almost in the same terms by the Prime Minister of France, and which, I believe, represents the settled sentiment and purpose of the country. I said :—

“ We shall never sheath the sword, which we have not lightly drawn, until Belgium recovers in full measure all, and more than all, she has sacrificed ; until France is adequately secured against the menace of aggression ; until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed upon an unassailable foundation, and until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed.”

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What I said early in November, now, after four months, I repeat to-day. We have not relaxed, nor shall we relax, in the pursuit of every one and all of the aims which I have described. These are great purposes, and to achieve them we must draw upon all our resources, both material and spiritual. On the one side, the material side, the demand presented in these Votes is for men, for money, for the fullest equipment of the apparatus of war. On the other side, which I have called the spiritual side, the appeal is to those ancient, inbred qualities of our race which have never failed us in times of stress, qualities of self-mastery, self-sacrifice, patience, tenacity, willingness to bear one another's burdens, the unity which springs from the dominating sense of a common duty, unfailing faith, inflexible resolve.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

In the House of Commons, Nov. 2, 1915

I AM sure, Sir, the House will not desire to proceed with its ordinary business without expressing, as I venture to do, in the name of the whole House, our regret at the unfortunate mishap which our King has sustained. I am glad to say that His Majesty is now once more upon British soil. He is going on as well as could possibly be expected. His injuries are not serious, but the occasion is one of which I think we ought to take advantage to express to him once more our admiration at the manner in which he has always discharged the peculiarly responsible duties in these times as Sovereign of this Empire, and our personal affection and respect.

The statement which I am about to make to the House has been delayed in point of time by circumstances which I regret, but which I could not control. The delay has had one consequence—perhaps I ought to call it an advantage—in that it has enabled me to receive from every possible quarter injunctions, counsels, exhortations, and warnings as to what I am, and as to what I am not, to say. I am afraid I am doomed to disappoint many expectations, but not the least the expectations of those of my many advisers who seem to think that it is my duty to appear here to-day in the guise either of a criminal in the dock—making the best defence he can for a somewhat

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doubtful past, or even of a white-sheeted penitent—with a couple of candles, one in each hand, doing penance and asking for absolution. I do not propose to adopt either the one attitude or the other. I am going to speak to the House to-day as the head of the Government, and in that capacity to describe, as far as possible, our actual and prospective situation to a nation which, as I believe, is as determined to-day as it has ever been to prosecute this war to a successful issue, and which trusts the Government, however—and by whomsoever that Government may be composed—to use every means, and to exhaust, if need be, every resource in the attainment of our common and supreme purpose.

It is true that to-day some parts of the horizon are overcast. This War, like all the great wars of history, has been fruitful in surprises and disappointments to all the combatants engaged. For us here in this country it seems to me at this moment to call in an exceptional degree for three things: a proper sense of perspective, a limitless stock of patience, and an overflowing reservoir of both active and passive courage. I do not think our people as a whole—I need not pay the compliment of more than passing notice to the small coterie of professional whippers who keep our enemies supplied with a daily diet of false hopes—show any lack, or any falling off, in any of these qualities. All they desire, as far as I can discern and appreciate their minds, is to be told, to the extent which diplomatic and military exigencies permit, how our cause stands, and to be assured that in the maintenance and the defence of that cause we, as a Government and as a people, are playing a worthy part. The wish for the fullest possible information is natural and is most legitimate; nor can there be possibly any greater mistake than to suppose that

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the Government has any interest of any kind in concealing anything that is known to themselves, subject to the one overruling condition that its disclosure does not assist the enemy.

How do we stand to-day? When we began the War, in August of last year, we were prepared to send abroad, and without hitch or delay we sent abroad in August and the early part of September, six Infantry and two Cavalry Divisions. In the operations which are described by Sir John French in the despatch that is published to-day—in those operations of the last week of September and the early part of October of the present year—he had under his command not far short of 1,000,000 men. To these, of course, must be added troops employed in the Dardanelles, in Egypt, and in the other theatres of war, as well as our reserves and our garrisons for the defence of the United Kingdom and of the outlying parts of the Empire. How has this gigantic Force been got together by a nation which has never aspired to be a military Power, whose main reliance both for defence and, if need be, and should occasion arise, for aggression, has always been upon its Navy—how has it been composed? First and foremost, of course, of the manhood of this United Kingdom. In the course of the last fifteen months—I leave for the moment the Navy out of account—we have recruited for the purposes of the Army, Regular and Territorial, an enormous number—I do not like for the moment to give the precise figures—an unprecedented number of men. The contribution of India is splendid and well known.

There are one or two figures I should like to give to the House, and, through the House, to the country and the Empire, which show the assistance that we have received from the Dominions of the Crown. Canada has contributed 96,000 officers and men to

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the Expeditionary Force. Australia has sent 92,000. New Zealand has sent 25,000. South Africa, having completed the reduction, after a most successful and brilliant campaign, of German South West Africa, has supplied important contingents for service in East and Central Africa, and, in addition, has furnished 6,500 men for service in Europe. Newfoundland has sent 1,600 men, in addition to her substantial contributions to the Royal Navy. The West Indies have supplied 2,000, and contingents have been provided by Ceylon and Fiji. In these figures, remarkable and significant as they are, I have included only the Forces furnished in the shape of complete units. No account is taken in these figures of the preparation made for the maintenance of these units in the field—the future expansion of contingents already supplied—nor of the very large number of men from all parts of our Empire who have made their own way to the United Kingdom and engaged themselves here. I should add, to complete that aspect of the story, that in Rhodesia, East Africa, and the West African Colonies important additions to the existing local Forces have been placed in the field, whilst in the other Colonies and Dependencies more remote from active military operations, all defensive organisations have received a profound stimulus.

I have said nothing, so far, of the Navy, but let me add, while I am dealing with our Military Forces—for I am certain it will interest the House, and the whole Empire—an account of the service which the Navy has rendered in the transport of our troops. Since the War began the Transport Department of the Admiralty, for the Army alone, have carried 2,500,000 officers and men, and 320,000 sick and wounded, and nurses. They have carried, further, 2,500,000 tons of stores and munitions, and 800,000

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horses, mules, and camels. These operations have involved thousands of voyages through seas which, at one time—though happily that time has now long since past—were subject to the raids of German cruisers, and which even now, to some extent, though I believe a rapidly diminishing extent, are infested by submarines. Up to the present—and I think this is a most remarkable fact—the loss of life in the whole of these gigantic oversea operations has been considerably less than one-tenth per cent. I do not believe that anywhere in the history of the world any nation, under any conditions, can produce such a comparable record. Of course, these figures, as the House will understand, are exclusive of millions of tons of stores, mainly coal and oil, which have been carried for the Navy and for Allied Governments.

I said for the moment I would leave the actual service of the Navy itself out of the account. But has there ever been anything comparable to it in history? There they are, our men of the Grand Fleet, living—as I told them when I had the honour, a couple of months ago, of addressing them myself—in those dim and distant spaces, in the twilight, as far as public observation is concerned, unnoticed, unadvertised, performing with an efficiency and a vigilance that it is impossible to describe, or even to appreciate, service to the whole Empire, which makes not only us here absolutely secure against invasion, but which has cleared the whole high seas from one end of the globe to the other of the cruisers of our enemies, and of the whole of the German mercantile marine.

Where is that great Fleet, on which so much thought, so much science, and so much money was expended, which was to be a perpetual menace to us here in the United Kingdom? Locked up in the Baltic, it dare not show its face upon any sea where it can be met

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and dealt with; and the whole effective maritime military resources of Germany upon the seas, after fifteen months of war, are reduced to the sporadic and constantly diminishing efforts of a few furtive submarines, which have sent to the bottom far more innocent, unoffending civilians than any armed enemies. I think figures such as these are more eloquent than columns of rhetoric, and I can conceive no better medicine for people, if there be such, outside a few very small and selected areas in this country, who attempt to be downhearted and doubtful that the Empire is playing its part in the greatest struggle in history. I am not going to apologise, or to assume an attitude of excuse or defence either for the people of this Empire, who have borne their part so magnificently, or for the Government of this country, which from the beginning of the War up to this moment has, to the best of its ability—I doubt not with many shortcomings and mistakes—and, I believe, with the confidence of the great mass of our fellow-countrymen, controlled and organised and directed this great effort.

Having said something of the Forces which we have brought into being, and the debt we owe to our fellow-citizens all over the Empire, I pass to the very important and relevant question: What are we doing with all this vast apparatus of destruction and defence? I will say nothing, or hardly anything of the Western theatre of War, which for the last year has absorbed by far the larger part of our Army. Our total casualties in France and Flanders up to the present moment, or at any rate up to a week ago, were 377,000 men—that is to say, considerably more than twice the total number of the Expeditionary Force which was dispatched in August and September of last year, though, happily, the very large percentage of the recoveries from wounds

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makes the net permanent wastage on a much smaller scale. Sir John French's Dispatch, published to-day, described the latest achievements of his gallant Army. For the moment, so far as that sphere of War is concerned, I have nothing to add on the part of the Government, except that, so far as I know, in this Western theatre the Germans have not, on balance, gained one foot of ground since April of the present year. Indeed, that is, I believe, a very great understatement of the case.

I turn for the moment to the Eastern theatre. Though I am going to deal exclusively or mainly with the rôle played by our own troops, I cannot pass to that theatre without pointing out to the House the supreme fighting qualities of the Russian soldier, which have never been more splendidly or more conspicuously manifested than during the recent retreat, and assuring our great Ally there that we here in this country have the greatest confidence in his capacity, ultimately, and before long, to roll back the tide of invasion, and to reverse the past. But, as I have said, I am concerned to-day and for the moment with the doings of our own Forces in that quarter of the War. First, I would like to say two or three words on an important and a highly successful campaign, which has not, I think, attracted the attention it deserves, namely, the proceedings of our troops in Mesopotamia. The object of sending a Force, which originally consisted of only one Division—the 6th—in the autumn of last year, to Mesopotamia was to secure the neutrality of the Arabs, to safeguard our interests in the Persian Gulf, to protect the oilfields, and generally to maintain the authority of our flag in the East. The history of what has taken place since can be very easily summarised.

In November last General Sir Arthur Barrett, with the 16th and 18th Brigades of the 6th Division, after

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a pitched battle with the Turks, occupied Basra. In January a further advance was made, which resulted in the capture of Kurna, which, as the House probably knows, is at the junction of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Two or three months later, in April, a second Division was added to the Force. The command was assumed by General Sir John Nixon. After a brilliant series of land and river operations the Turks were driven back, both on the Upper Euphrates and the Tigris. In July the final positions on both rivers were captured with heavy casualties to the enemy, and General Nixon's Force is now within measurable distance of Bagdad. I do not think that in the whole course of the War there has been a series of operations more carefully contrived, more brilliantly conducted, and with a better prospect of final success.

I come now to what is not so uncheckered a chapter, the story of our operations in the Eastern theatre of War—I mean those which have gone on in the Dardanelles. During the first few months of the War we were still at peace with Turkey; but owing to causes which are now well known, and to which I need not go back, a state of War between ourselves and the Turkish Empire came into existence in the first week of November, 1914. From that moment it was no longer possible, either from a strategic or from a political point of view, to concentrate our entire energy on the Western theatre. The Turks threatened our Allies, the Russians, in the Caucasus. They threatened, not directly, but remotely and indirectly, our position in Egypt. They were able to close the Black Sea, and, in consequence of that, to cut off our source of supply of Russian wheat from Russian ports. The advent of Turkey as an ally of Germany and Austria produced a great, and in some respects a lasting effect upon the attitude of the Balkan States. When that

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condition of things was brought about, the Government had to face a question which was not merely strategic. And I will venture to say here, because it applies to a great many other operations, past, present, and future, that in a great War like this you cannot determine your policy or your course of action entirely and exclusively by Military and Naval considerations. There are other items that come in. It is the duty of the Government very largely to rely upon the advice of its Military and Naval advisers, but in the long run the Government, any Government which is worthy of the name, which is adequate to the discharge of the trust which the nation has reposed in it, must bring all these things into some kind of proportion one to the other. Sometimes it is necessary—not only expedient, but necessary—to run risks and encounter dangers which purely Naval or Military policy would warn them against. We must take all those things into account.

Now, with regard to this matter. From the first moment that a state of War began to exist between Turkey and ourselves in November last year, we had to consider, in consultation with our Naval and Military advisers, what was the best and most politic course for us to take, either aggressively or defensively, in that part of the globe. In January we had not sufficient Military Forces available—having regard to the requirements of the Western theatre—for service in the East, to do more than provide for local defence in Egypt against the impending Turkish attack, which was delivered and utterly defeated on February 2. The Government had then brought under their notice the possibility of Naval attack in the Dardanelles. After full investigation and consultation with the Naval experts, including the Admiral commanding in that part of the *Ægean*, and notwithstanding—I am betraying no secret in saying this—some doubts and

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hesitations, which undoubtedly there were in the mind of our principal Naval adviser at that time, Lord Fisher, the Government felt justified in sanctioning the attack. People who think and say that that attack was initiated without due consideration, without a full review of all its Naval possibilities, are entirely mistaken. It was most carefully considered. It was developed in consultation between the Admiral on the spot and the War Staff of the Admiralty here, and before any final decision was taken it was communicated to the French Admiralty, who entirely approved of it, and agreed to take part in it, and it was—I am not using too strong a word—enthusiastically received and acclaimed by the illustrious Grand Duke who then commanded the Russian Armies, and who rightly thought that it would assist his operations in the Caucasus.

The matter was carefully reviewed over and over again by the War Council, and in answer to a question which was put to me to which I promised to reply. I may say that all the operations so contrived before a shot was fired, or any actual steps taken, were communicated to, and approved by, the Cabinet. In the circumstances of the case in which we then stood, the operation conceived was a purely Naval operation. We could not afford at that time—Lord Kitchener said, and we all agreed—any substantial Military support. It was, therefore, decided to make the attempt with the Naval Forces alone. I take my full share of the responsibility for the initiation of that operation—my full share. I deprecate more than I can say the attempt to allocate responsibility to one Minister or another, or to suggest that in a matter of this kind some undefined personality, of great authority and over-mastering will, controlled and directed the strategy of the operations. That is not the case. If anybody

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is responsible for the initiation of this enterprise in the Dardanelles, nobody is more responsible than I. I thought then, as everybody must have thought who knew the whole circumstances, and surveyed the whole situation, that we ran great risks; but, on the other hand, we had very great, and in the prosecution of the War, capital objects then in view—to influence the whole Balkan situation in a sense favourable to the Allies, open communications with the Black Sea, and relieve what was then a very pressing necessity in this country—the necessity for a fuller and freer influx of wheat and other supplies—and, if we could, strike a blow at the very heart of the Turkish Empire.

As I have said, in its first conception and initiation this was a purely naval affair. The naval attack took place towards the end of February, and the outer forts gave way and were completely subjected. Those naval operations were continued systematically for a month. They culminated in the attack on the Narrows on March 18, which resulted in a set-back and the loss of or damage to several important naval units. We had then to consider whether, and to what extent, this operation should be continued, and it was the opinion of those who advised us—and looking back on the past to bring myself again to resurvey the situation, it seems to me that, if not a sound, at any rate it was a very tenable opinion—that by the aid of an adequate Military Force the attack might still be driven home with success. Sir Ian Hamilton was selected to command the expedition. He left London early in March, and was present at the naval attack on March 18; and a few days later, after consultation with the Vice-Admiral on the spot, he reported to us that they were in agreement that a joint naval and military attack was necessary. The actual plan of operations was left, as I think it ought to be, to the judgment of the commanders on

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the spot, though, so far as I know, there was never any disagreement between them and the opinion of the General Staff here at home.

I will not go into the intermediate stages of the operation until we come to the beginning of August. We had then assembled at the Dardanelles a very large naval and military force. The actual operations which took place have been described, and are familiar to the House and to the public. I will not attempt at this moment—it would be quite irrelevant to my purpose—to attach either praise or blame to this man or that, or to this unit or that, but I will say this for myself, that, in the whole course of the War, with its ups and downs, I have never sustained a keener disappointment than in the failure of this operation. The chances of success, as it seemed to us and to those on the spot, were not only great, but preponderant. The consequences of success, if success had been attained, were almost immeasurable. It would have solved the whole situation in the Balkans; it would have prevented the possibility of that which unhappily now is the realised fact, the adhesion of Bulgaria to our opponents; it would have laid the capital of the Turkish Empire open to menace and possibly to capture; and, throughout the whole of the Eastern world, it would have been acclaimed as the most brilliant and conclusive demonstration of the superiority of the Allies. We did not succeed, notwithstanding the magnificent exhibition, never surpassed, of gallantry and of resource on the part of our troops, and by none more conspicuously than on the part of our Australian troops.

Nor ought the House to forget the extraordinary and magnificent service rendered throughout these operations by the whole of the Royal Navy. Nothing has been more conspicuous than the service of our submarines. Let me just mention this fact, a most

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significant and most encouraging fact, as showing how the old spirit of the British Navy—its adventure, its gallantry, its resource—pervades those who have to manipulate these strange modern machines, just as much as it did those who served under Blake, or Hood, or Nelson. After the 26th of last month, British submarines operating against enemy vessels in the Sea of Marmora have succeeded in sinking or damaging two battleships, five gunboats, one torpedo boat, eight transports, and no less than 197 supply ships of all kinds, whether steamers or sailing vessels. That is a wonderful chapter in the history of the British Navy. The arrival of German submarines took place in May, and, of course, added an enormous danger to the situation. The Navy showed themselves quite equal to it. Safe harbours were selected and prepared where ships could remain securely. Small craft were assembled in great numbers to maintain the communications of the Army, and, finally, a number of specially constructed vessels, largely due to the inventive genius of Lord Fisher himself, which had been built by the Admiralty in anticipation of such requirements as this, went out to the Mediterranean, and have done, from that day to this, most magnificent work. The Navy throughout this campaign has risen superior to all difficulties, and has been able to maintain the communications of the Army intact. But, as I have said, the result of the series of attacks made in August has been disappointing. I admit that to the full. I am telling the House the whole truth about this matter, because I think the country ought to know it.

But when you come to form a judgment—I think it is premature yet to do it—of whether this attack on the Dardanelles was an operation which ought to have been undertaken, you must consider what would have happened if it had not been undertaken. It is at least

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probable that the Russians, who were then already beginning to retreat before the Germans in Poland, might have had a serious set-back in the Caucasus. In all probability, a great attack by the Turks might have been organised against us in Egypt. The Mesopotamia Expedition, of which I have spoken, might have been swept out of existence, and Bulgaria would almost certainly have allied herself with the Central Powers months before the time when she actually did. And during the whole of this time, and up to the present moment, do not forget that our Force on the Gallipoli Peninsula has held up, and is holding up, a force of something like 200,000 Turks, and preventing them from doing incalculable mischief in other parts of the Eastern theatre. I am not, on behalf of the Government, going to say more as regards the future of this particular sphere of the theatre of War, because I think, as I said a moment ago, it is too soon to pronounce a final judgment. The situation at the Dardanelles is receiving, I need not say, our most careful and anxious consideration, not as an isolated thing, but as part and parcel of a far larger strategic question which is raised by the whole of the recent developments in the Eastern theatre of War.

I will say a few words, and they shall be very few, because they must be very carefully chosen, on the position in the Balkans. Ever since the beginning of the War, and especially since Turkey entered into it, we—and by “we” I mean not only ourselves, but the Allied Powers, who have always acted together—have not ceased or slackened in our efforts to promote united action among the Balkan States and Roumania. The efforts of diplomacy ever since August and September last in that direction have been ceaseless and untiring. The result—I again make this admission—as far as the promotion of Balkan unity is concerned, has been disappointment and failure, and it is not surprising,

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perhaps, that there are critics who think that by greater firmness at one point, and by greater adroitness at another, more successful gains might have been made. If I might, for a moment, say a word to those critics, there are two or three points which are often left out of account, and which ought to be taken into account when you are dealing with this tangled and thorny chapter in diplomatic history. The first is this, that unity of direction is as important an asset in diplomacy as it is in strategy. Throughout the whole of these proceedings Germany has had that advantage, for Austria has always been a mere cypher and appendix to German diplomacy. But with the Allies, on the other hand, every important step has, naturally and necessarily, been taken in consultation and in concert between three and, latterly, four different Powers. With the best good will in the world, and with the most genuine common purpose, there must be differences of angles and of points of view in an operation of that kind.

Another point which is equally relevant and important in this particu'ar connection is the mutual animosities—I am not using the word in any censorious sense—of the Balkan States themselves, an unhappy and a still unliquidated legacy of the two Balkan wars, and especially of the Treaty of Bucharest. It is an easy thing, it has been throughout an easy thing, for Germany to make lavish promises to Bulgaria of Serbian and Albanian, and perhaps, secretly, even of Greek territory. But we, the Allies, could not barter away the property of our Allies and friends behind their backs, without their consent, or without an assurance, at any rate, of adequate compensation, which has been a source of infinite complication and controversy. Further, when the Allies are reproached, as they are in some quarters, with being too late in providing active help for Serbia, it must be remembered that up to

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the very last moment there was the strongest reason to believe that Greece would acknowledge and act upon her Treaty obligations to Serbia. When, on September 21, after the Bulgarian mobilisation had begun, M. Venizelos, who was then the Prime Minister of Greece, asked France and ourselves for 150,000 men, it was on the express understanding that Greece would also mobilise. Greece did in fact mobilise under his direction on September 24, but it was not until October 2 that M. Venizelos found himself able to agree to the landing of British and French troops under the formal protest, a merely formal protest, which he had already made to the French Government.

On October 4—I wish these dates to be borne in mind—M. Venizelos announced what had happened to the Greek Chamber, and at the same time declared that Greece must abide by her Treaty with Serbia. Next day the King repudiated the declaration, and M. Venizelos resigned. The new Government which succeeded declined to recognise that a *casus fœderis* had arisen between Greece and Serbia, despite our constant insistence that Greece should make common cause with Serbia, and the new Greek Government, while declaring the desire to remain on friendly terms with the Allies, declined to depart from their attitude of neutrality. Those are facts which ought to be taken into account by the people who criticise the alleged inertia of the Allied Governments. I make no comment upon that for the moment. I think it is better not to do so. The result is that Serbia, without Greek support, was left to bear the brunt of a frontal invasion by Germany and Austria and a side attack from the King of Bulgaria. I have to say this—and I say it on behalf of the Government and of the people of the United Kingdom—we here in this United Kingdom, and I know it to be also the opinion of our

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French and our Russian Allies, cannot allow Serbia to become a prey of this sinister and nefarious combination. The General Staffs of the French Army, and of our own, have been in close consultation, consultations which culminated with the very welcome visit to London, at the end of last week, of the illustrious Commander-in-Chief of the French Army, General Joffre. The result, I am glad to say, is complete agreement between us, not only as to the ends, but as to the means. The House will not expect me to, and I ought not to say by what method or in what form that common policy will be pursued. But this I will say, our co-operation will be close, cordial, and in full concert, and Serbia may be assured, so far as I am able to do so, and I give her that assurance on the part of the British Government to-day, that her independence is regarded by us as one of the essential objects of the Allied Powers.

I am sorry to have kept the House so long with these matters, but I set forth with the object of telling them everything that I could well do; and I now proceed to ask myself and to ask them the further question after this review of the various theatres of operation: What are we doing and what ought we to do, in addition to all that we have done, first, as a community, and then as classes and as individuals? We have, as my right hon. Friend the Minister of Munitions said in a speech in May last—which I trust was widely read—as partners with our great Allies, three special co-ordinate functions to discharge. First of all, there is the supply of men, an adequate supply of men for the Army; then the provision of the munitions of war, not only for our own troops but for the Forces of our Allies; and thirdly, the burden which we have taken upon ourselves, and which to the utmost of our ability we shall endeavour to discharge—the burden of common allied finance. One of the things which we have

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to consider is how we are to co-ordinate and to adjust the different functions, the object being that we here in the United Kingdom and in the British Empire should contribute most fruitfully and most effectively to the common cause. I would say just one word, first of all, as to the third of those points, namely, the question of finance. The financial position to-day is serious. The extent to which we here in this country are buying goods abroad in excess of our exports is more than £30,000,000 per month against an average of about £11,000,000 per month before the war; and, at the same time, we are making advances to our Allies and to others which were estimated by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget speech to amount to a total during the current financial year, to say no more of what is to come, to £423,000,000. We have also, be it remembered, alone amongst the belligerent countries, maintained our free market for gold, and, indeed, have exported a large amount to all parts of the world; and it is certain we are making purchases and undertaking commitments to provide credits abroad to an extent that can only be paid for by the further export of gold, or by the further sale abroad of securities and of our own debts.

I only bring these facts, which are familiar, in this context to the recollection of the House, in order to say once more that this is a burden which, rich as we are, resourceful as we are, we cannot go on discharging unless there is, both on the part of the Government as well as on the part of the individuals, the most strict and stringent rule of economy, the avoidance of unnecessary expenditure, and the curtailment of charges which under normal conditions we should think right and necessary, and, if I may use a homely expression, cutting our coat according to the cloth with which we have to make it. I do not think, I am

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not a pessimist in this matter, our position compares unfavourably with that of the Governments who are opposed to us. The consumption of the German Government and the German nation has been far in excess of what they have been able to produce or import, and their stocks of available commodities are, from all we hear, rapidly diminishing and dwindling. And, further, the standard of life of the greater part of the population of Germany has been depressed to a point at which there is little or no margin of reserve. We in these respects no doubt apparently and ostensibly stand in a better position, but I would once more say, with all the emphasis of which I am capable, we cannot sustain the burden which this great War has laid upon us unless as individuals, as classes, as a community, and as a Government we make, and are prepared to make, far greater sacrifices than we have hitherto done in the direction of retrenchment and economy. There is another point in that connection I should like to mention before I deal with the question of men, and to which for a moment I desire to call the attention of the House, and that is the cost of the Army. The average cost of the Regular Army in peace time, on a very rough and an approximate estimate, used to be reckoned and is reckoned as about £100 per head per annum. I am quite certain that I am using a very moderate and more than moderate figure when I say in the condition which now prevails the complete cost per head of the Army, the vastly increased Army which we are now maintaining, is somewhere between £250 and £300 per head. I do not want to go into details. I purposely said it was an approximate and a very rough estimate. This is a fact which everybody ought to bear in mind.

I come to the question of men. I lay down myself one very simple proposition, and it is this. Under

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the conditions in which we are now placed every man in this country, without any distinction of any kind, ought to be doing the thing for which, in view of the purposes of the War, he is best fitted. I make no exception or qualification of any kind. The difficulty, of course, is to find out any system under which you can say what each particular man or class of men should do, and my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board introduced the National Register, of which Parliament approved, with the very object of providing the material upon which a system of that kind might be based. I will go a step further. I am speaking my own views, though I have no reason to think they are seriously dissented from by any of my colleagues, and where in the course of the arguments I think they are, I will draw attention to possible points of dissent. My next proposition is this: After you have made, by the best system of examination and classification that you can adopt, adequate provision for all the other necessary national services, amongst which I need not say I do not merely include the fabrication of munitions, but also the maintenance of industries which are essential to the life of our country, the carrying on of industries that are essential for the production of our exports—when you have made adequate provision for all those national interests, the residuum—not, perhaps, a very happy word to use, I will say the reservoir—which is left of men of military and recruitable age ought to be fully explored and exhausted. Now I approach thornier ground. There have been, and probably are, differences of opinion as to whether that recruitable reservoir can be fully made use of by what is called the voluntary system without resort to some form of compulsion. I will let the House for once into a Cabinet secret. So many things have been said and written of what

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goes on in the Cabinet, which those of us who sit in the Cabinet have never heard or dreamt of in our lives. But I will let the House into a Cabinet secret—I hope without breaking any obligation of secrecy or any confidence—and that is that there have been differences of opinion amongst the members of the Cabinet as to whether what we need, whether, in other words, what I call the full exploitation and employment of the recruitable reservoir, can or cannot be obtained without resort to some form of compulsion. I will state my own view. In the first place, I have no abstract or a priori objection of any sort or kind to compulsion—in time of war. I have nothing at the back of my mind which would make me go to the stake, or through some less severe form of penance, in defence of what is called the voluntary principle. I think that in time of war we must get rid of all those predilections both on the one side and on the other. It is a pure question of practical expediency—how are we going to bring the war to a successful conclusion? I will make a further admission—if admission it can be called—that is that I think our system of voluntary recruiting, which does very well, or well enough, under normal conditions in time of peace, operates, as it has been hitherto practised, in a haphazard, capricious, and, to some extent, unjust way with regard both to individuals and to classes. It is like a net with very irregular meshes. It lets through some things which ought not to be allowed to escape, and it holds and keeps some things which had better be let through.

My objection to the employment of compulsion for the purpose of recruiting the Army under existing conditions has not been based at all upon abstract attachment to an a priori principle, or upon blindness or indifference to the imperfections and defects of our existing methods of voluntary recruiting. It is based

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upon an entirely different ground, namely, that the employment of compulsion under existing conditions would forfeit what I regard to be of supreme and capital importance, that is, the maintenance of the national unity. That again is an abstract objection, but when translated into concrete terms it means this: if you were to apply, I do not speak of any particular method, but any method of coercion or compulsion, without something in the nature, I will not say of universal, but of general consent, you would defeat your own purpose. It would not be a practicable or workable method of making good and filling up the gaps left by the defects of the voluntary system. I am speaking my own view—entirely my own view. My proposition, if I were to formulate one, would be this: not that I rule out compulsion as an impossible expedient, but that compulsion, if resorted to, ought only to be resorted to, and can only from a practical point of view be resorted to—or, in other words, be made a workable expedient for filling up the gap which you have to supply—with something in the nature of general consent. I am glad to say that to a large extent these, I hope, are not for the moment practical or relevant considerations. Lord Derby's scheme, the details of which are familiar to the House and to the country—therefore I need not attempt to describe them—is being worked, I believe, with the hearty consent and co-operation even of the most ardent supporters of compulsion, certainly with the good will and active co-operation of organised labour, the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, and all the various agencies in the country which are seeking to supply this great national necessity.

If you ask me how many men we ought to aim at getting under that scheme, or under any scheme, my answer is that you ought to aim at securing everybody

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of military age and capacity who is left after you have completely supplied the other national necessities to which I have referred. I would much rather state the requirements of the Government and of the nation in those general terms than by reference to any particular set of figures. It covers everything. It covers everybody who remains over and who ought to be made available wherever he may be or whoever he may be. If you ask me again when I should form a conclusion as to whether the voluntary system, as organised under Lord Derby's scheme, had reached a result which would enable us to say whether it was successful or not—I think he has fixed November 30 as the date on which he will close the lists—my answer is, as soon after that date as it is possible to classify and arrive at the results which his labours have achieved. Then, and not before then, and not later, can we say whether or not the experiment of voluntary recruiting is a success. I very much deprecate—I hope I shall have here the assent both of those who, like myself, are strong voluntarists and of those who are disposed to favour a system of compulsion—I think it would be much better to leave it like that, and come to a decision when we have arrived at that point of actual experiment, than to lay down hard and fast lines in terms of numbers as to this or that principle.

I believe myself that the result will be wholly satisfactory. I have not the least fear of there being any necessity to resort to anything beyond this great organised effort which is being carried on with the good will of all parties in the State and with the hearty co-operation of the leaders of organised labour. But if, when every just allowance has been made for other necessary work, and the whole of this machinery has been in operation and has achieved what it can, there should still be found a substantial number of men of

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military age not required for other purposes, who, without excuse, hold back from the service of their country, I believe that the very same conditions which make compulsion impossible now, namely, the absence of general consent, would force the country to the view that they must consent to supplement by some form of legal obligation the failure of the voluntary system. As far as I myself am concerned, I should be prepared to recommend them to take that course. But I dismiss it as a contingency which I do not think is ever likely to arise.

I am determined—I stick at nothing—I am determined that we shall win this War. Sooner than not win the War, if I found—I do not believe I shall—such a situation as that, I should come down without the faintest hesitation or doubt to all my friends, those who, like myself, are what I call strong supporters of the voluntary system, and say: “We have done what we could; we have not obtained the results we hoped for; we must do what is still necessary by other means.” Let me say one word more in this connection. I am told by Lord Derby and others that there is some doubt among married men who are now being asked to enlist, whether, having enlisted, or promised to enlist, they may not be called upon to serve while younger and unmarried men are holding back, and not doing their duty. Let them at once disabuse themselves of that notion. So far as I am concerned, I should certainly say the obligation of the married man to serve ought not to be enforced or held to be binding upon him unless and until—I hope by voluntary effort, if it be needed in the last resort, as I have explained, by other means—the unmarried men are dealt with.

I felt bound to deal at some length with that matter—not because I myself have any doubt. I have far

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too much confidence in the patriotism and public spirit of my fellow-countrymen to doubt for one moment that they are going to respond to that appeal—that the young men, the unmarried men with whom the promise of the future lies, are not going in this great emergency to shirk, and to leave the fortunes of their country and the assertion of the greatest cause for which we have ever fought, to those who have given greater hostages to fortune and are least able to bear the brunt. I think it is only fair, just, and right to the House of Commons that we should face every contingency.

I have detained the House at very great length, but there is one other matter to which I must refer. I have spoken of finance. I have spoken of the provision of men. But I am told there is great anxiety in some quarters as to what is called the higher direction of the War. We have a Cabinet of twenty-two members. Some people seem to think that a Cabinet of twenty-two members is incompetent to conduct the affairs of a great Empire in times of emergency like this. Mr. Pitt, when he carried on the great war against France more than one hundred years ago, had, I think, a Cabinet of seven or nine, but the exiguity in size of that Cabinet did not prevent him from committing great blunders, or from suffering from many strokes of ill-fortune. For myself, I do not think there is any numerical specific against either want of foresight or want of good luck. That is a very mechanical way of looking at it. I do not propose to change the size of the Cabinet; but, of course, there is a great deal to be said in time of war for having one, or it may be more—at any rate one—comparatively small body of men who will deal with the daily exigencies of the State. We realised that—it may be very strange for some of our censors to know it—in

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the first few weeks of the War. I do not think any Prime Minister has ever, to a greater degree than I have done, delegated work, which in normal conditions is done by the Cabinet as a whole, to Committees and smaller bodies. I did not know it until I was reminded of it the other day, but I believe, from first to last, since the beginning of the War, we have had something like fifty different Committees and advisory bodies, all framed out of the Cabinet, sometimes with material aid from outside, to which special departments of activity, brought into prominence or urgency by the needs of the War, have been relegated—subject always to ultimate Cabinet responsibility.

In particular, we have had since a very early period of the War a body fluctuating in number from time to time, and which has varied in name. Sometimes it has been called a "War Council," sometimes a "War Committee." Sometimes it has gone by other designations. It is a body to which either general questions of State or questions of strategy in particular areas and arenas have, by the consent of the Cabinet, been referred. I have come to the conclusion, after now some fifteen months of experience, that it is desirable to maintain that system, but to limit still further the number of the body to whom what I may call the strategic conduct of the War is from time to time referred. I think, and my colleagues agree with me, that the Committee, or by whatever name it may be called, should be a body of not less than three, and perhaps not more than five in number, but with this important proviso that, whether it be three or five, it should, of course, have power to summon to its deliberation and to its assistance the particular Minister concerned with the particular Department whose special knowledge is needed, or is desirable, for the determination of each issue as it arises. I think further—

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and this is rather a delicate question—the relations between any such body and the Cabinet should be of an elastic kind. At the same time, it should be understood that the Cabinet, which, as a body, has the ultimate responsibility for questions of policy, shall be kept, not only constantly informed of the decisions and actions of the Committee, but in all questions which involve a change, or a new departure in policy, should be consulted before decisive action is taken. It is only on these lines that you can successfully conduct a War like this.

I entirely agree with those who say—and I have had plenty of experience—that it is very undesirable, and leads to delay and often to confusion, that decisions which have to be taken, very often at very short notice, should not become effective until they are referred to the Cabinet as a whole. That is perfectly true. I think a Committee such as I have indicated ought to be clothed with power to take such decisions, and to act upon them. On the other hand, I am very jealous of the maintenance of collective Cabinet responsibility for large changes and new departures in policy ; but I believe that in practice it will be found perfectly capable of working the two things together. That is what we propose to do. I hope that before many days are over we may be able to announce to the House, as I think the House ought to be told, the members who will compose the Committee, whatever the size that we ultimately decide upon. In conjunction with that, but still in connection with the subject of what is called the higher direction of the War, I attach very great importance, first of all to a more complete and intimate co-ordination between the staffs of the various Allied Powers. We have had a very happy illustration of the advantage of that in our recent deliberations with General Joffre. We should also have a more intimate

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and regular interchange by some form of combination with the staffs, not only of the War Office and the Admiralty, but with those who conduct our diplomatic affairs. It is impossible to carry on these things in watertight compartments. You must have co-ordination of contact—close, constant, practical, continuing. Those are the general outlines. Those are the views I desire to express to the House in regard to our position.

I have this afternoon tried to tell the House the whole truth. I am not aware—I do not think I have kept back anything known to us which ought to be known to the House, unless it is a thing which, if told, would go for the first time to our enemies. I have made no attempt to conceal anything in the past history of the War—its conduct, its failures—shortcomings, if you like.

If I may, by leave of the House, I should like, before I sit down, to say one or two words with regard to my own personal position. When the War broke out, I was the Head of the Government. I take my share—and no one has a larger share—of responsibility at that supreme moment for the attitude and policy of this country. A terrible responsibility it is, measured by what has happened, and by what is still to happen! Much of our best blood spilt! Thousands of young lives, the hope of our future, cut short in the very promise of their youth! The cry goes up in ever-increasing volume day by day and week by week from torn hearts, from mutilated homes. Every morning is there throughout the country, in almost every home, one or other of us who does not tremble to think of what message of direct and personal loss may be in store? We might have stood aloof—spectators and not actors in this the most moving tragedy in the history of man. We might have stood aloof, but is there one even of those who are enduring unspeakable anguish—childless parents, widowed wives, desolate comrades and friends—

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is there one who wishes—or even thinks—that Britain should have acted otherwise? I do not believe that there is. Searching, if the House will allow me to say so, the utmost depths of my own heart and conscience, I would not unsay or undo that great decision. I have from that moment to this laboured, with the unceasing and devoted aid of loyal counsellors and colleagues, to uphold the common cause, to bring to its support every resource in man and money, in prudence and courage, in unity and self-sacrifice that this Kingdom and this Empire can provide. That there have been errors and shortcomings, failures of judgment, lack of foresight in the conduct and direction of our policy, I am the first person in the United Kingdom to acknowledge and to deplore. That there has been anything of sloth, indifference, self-complacency, unwillingness to face unpalatable facts, a desire, or even a disposition, to conceal from our fellow-countrymen the truth, I challenge anyone to prove.

I am as confident as I was fifteen months ago that we are going to carry a righteous cause to a triumphant issue; and I am not going to shift the burden which has been put upon me until I am satisfied that I cannot bear it, or that it can be borne better by others. So long as I enjoy, and I am proud to think that I still do enjoy, the confidence of my Sovereign, of the House of Commons, and of the country, I shall not surrender the task, heavy indeed beyond the power of myself, or those of any other man, but as noble and as inspiring as any in history. If there be moments such as come to all of us when we are tempted to be faint-hearted, let us ask ourselves: What year in our history has done more to justify our faith in the manhood and the womanhood of our people? It has brought us, as we cannot at this moment forget, the imperishable story of the last hours of Edith Cavell facing a worse ordeal

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than the battlefield—the moments creeping on slowly and remorselessly and death already swallowed up in victory. She has taught the bravest man amongst us a supreme lesson of courage. Yes, Sir, and in this United Kingdom, and throughout the Dominions of the Crown, there are thousands of such women, but a year ago we did not know it. We have great traditions, but a nation cannot exist by traditions alone. Thank God, we have living examples of all the qualities which have built up and sustained our Empire! Let us be worthy of them, and endure to the end.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

To French Senators and Deputies,

April 10, 1916

THE relations between Great Britain and France have been established happily upon unshakable foundations, and during the testing experiences of this War those relations have become marked by intimacy and affection. We welcome these visits as tending to draw still closer the bonds that unite us, the bonds of the common purpose which we share.

During the last few days the Imperial Chancellor has been appealing once more to the sympathy of the neutral world for the hard case of Germany. Germany has been misunderstood. Her peace-loving purpose has been misconstrued.

The Chancellor declares that on December 9 he had expressed his readiness to enter into peace negotiations, but that then, as now, the enemy declined to consider such a thing. It is worth while to cite the actual language which he used on the occasion referred to. "If I am to speak of peace proposals I must first see the peace proposals of our enemies. If our enemies come to me with peace proposals proper to the dignity and assuring the safety of Germany, then we are always ready to discuss them."

What, therefore, the Chancellor means by a readiness on his part to enter into negotiations is that the initiative should come from us, and the decision rest with him.

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In other words, we are to assume the attitude of a defeated to a victorious adversary. But we are not defeated; we are not going to be defeated; and the Allies are bound by a solemn pact not to seek or accept a separate peace.

The terms upon which we are prepared to conclude peace are the accomplishment of the purposes for which we took up arms. Those purposes were declared by me as far back as November, 1914, and have been known to the world for more than sixteen months. I said, among other things, that we should not sheath the sword until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed.

The Chancellor first misquotes my language, and then proceeds to distort its obvious meaning and intention. Great Britain, and France also, entered the War not to strangle Germany, not to wipe her off the map of Europe, not to destroy or mutilate her national life, certainly not to interfere with (to use the Chancellor's language) "the free exercise of her peaceful endeavours." We were driven, both here and in France, to take up arms in order to prevent Germany (which for this purpose means Prussia) from establishing a position of military menace and dominance over her neighbours.

On several occasions in the last ten years Germany had given evidence of her intention to dictate to Europe under threat of war, and in violating the neutrality of Belgium she proved that she meant to establish her ascendancy even at the price of a universal war and of tearing up the basis of the European polity as established by Treaty. The purpose of the Allies in the War is to defeat that attempt, and thereby pave the way for an international system which will secure the principle of equal rights for all civilised States.

As a result of the War we intend to establish the principle that international problems must be handled

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by free negotiation on equal terms between free peoples, and that this settlement shall no longer be hampered and swayed by the over-mastering dictation of a Government controlled by a military caste. That is what I mean by the destruction of the military domination of Prussia—nothing more, but nothing less.

There is another aspect of the War to which we have from the beginning attached capital importance. The War began, as I have just said, in the unprovoked invasion and desolation of Belgium. From its first moment, the future fate of the smaller nationalities was seen to be in jeopardy, and the apprehensions which were then aroused have been more than justified by what has happened to Serbia and Montenegro.

We are in this struggle the champions not only of Treaty rights, but of the independent status and free development of the weaker countries. In these circumstances cynicism could hardly go farther than in the Chancellor's claim that it is for Germany (of all Powers) to insist when peace comes upon "giving the various races the chance of free evolution, along the lines of their mother tongue, and of national individuality." Apparently this principle is to be applied—I suppose on the approved Prussian lines—both to Poland and to Belgium.

In regard to the first of these two countries, the Poles have already had some illuminating experiences as to what is meant in Berlin by "free evolution along the lines of the mother tongue." The attempt to Germanise Prussian Poland has been for the last twenty years at once the strenuous purpose and the colossal failure of Prussian domestic policy. No one knows this better than the Chancellor, for he has been in his time one of its principal instruments, as, for example, when he tried to colonise Posen with German-speaking farmers. The use of the Polish

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language in schools, need I remind you, was restricted until it was only allowed for religious instruction, and finally even this concession was withdrawn, and the little Polish children had to learn to say their prayers in German. The wholesale strike of the children, the barbarous floggings that were inflicted on them, the arrests and imprisonment of their mothers, form a black chapter even in the annals of Prussian culture.

And, coming to Belgium, it is with this record that the Chancellor sheds tears over the fate of what he calls "the long-suppressed Flemish race," and declares it to be the future mission of Germany to secure for them "a sound evolution based on their mother tongue." What, I wonder, do the Flemish race themselves think of the prospect which is so opened out to them?

The Chancellor goes on to say that after the War there must be a *new* Belgium which is not to be a Franco-English vassal, but between whose people and the Germans—who have burnt their churches and pillaged their towns and laid waste their fields and trampled on their liberties—there is to be in the future the "collaboration of neighbours." A new development, indeed, of the theory of the rights and duties of neighbourhood!

My answer is a very simple one. We, the Allies, desire and are determined to see once again the old Belgium. She must not be allowed to suffer permanently from the wanton and wicked invasion of her freedom, and that which has been broken down must be repaired and restored.

I will not waste many words upon the Chancellor's lame and half-hearted attempt to justify the wholesale use of the submarine for the destruction of lives and property. He speaks of it as a legitimate measure of self-defence against our policy of using our command of the sea to put economic pressure upon our enemies,

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The Allies are, of course, in adopting and pursuing that policy exercising a belligerent right expressly sanctioned by the two greatest German Chancellors, Bismarck and Caprivi, recognised by every fighting Power in the Old World and the New, and they have endeavoured and are endeavouring to mitigate as far as possible the resulting inconvenience to neutral trade. They are prepared to justify the legality of all the measures they have taken as covered by the principles and spirit of international law applied to the developments of modern war. They have been carried out with the strictest regard to humanity, and we are not aware of a single instance of a neutral life lost by reason of the Allies' blockade.

The German submarine blockade of Great Britain was in fact commenced and developed long before our Order in Council of March, 1915. Among other instances the Dutch vessel *Maria* and the American vessel the *W. P. Frye*, both carrying food to these islands, were sunk respectively in September, 1914, and January, 1915.

On February 4, 1915, the German Government declared their intention of instituting a general submarine blockade of the United Kingdom with the avowed purpose of cutting off all our overseas supplies. It was not till March 11 that we announced those measures against German trade which the Chancellor now suggests were the cause of the German submarine policy. I need not dwell upon the flagrant violation which has attended its execution of the elementary rules and practices of international law and of the common dictates and obligations of humanity. Up to this moment it is being ruthlessly carried out, as well against neutrals as belligerents.

It is of the highest importance that we should at once reply to the Imperial Chancellor. It is necessary

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that we should lose no time in answering these travesties of the facts. We, with our Allies—France, Russia, Belgium, Serbia, Italy, Japan—have been fighting side by side with clean hands and with clear consciences, and side by side as we have the will, so we are confident that we have the power, to vindicate the liberties of Europe.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

At Royal Albert Hall, on Belgian
Independence Day, July 21, 1916

I PROMISED some months ago that I would be present if I could at this interesting celebration, but at the same time I made the stipulation, which I am going to observe in letter and in spirit, that I must content myself with a very few words of congratulation and of sympathy.

It is eighty-five years to-day since Prince Leopold ascended the Throne of the new kingdom of Belgium, and four months later the neutrality of that kingdom was guaranteed by the Treaty of London, to which Austria and Prussia, with Russia and Great Britain, were parties. For more than eighty years Belgium lived at peace under the ægis of that international guarantee, developing her resources with almost unparalleled industry and ingenuity, and contributing her full share to the common stock of European culture.

Two years ago she was subjected to one of those testing ordeals which try and prove the stuff of which nations are made. The peace of Europe was wantonly broken, and Belgium was asked to become the stepping-stone, and therefore the accomplice, of the aggressor. With a decisiveness and an enthusiasm which blotted out all party differences, and fused in a moment the whole nation into perfect unity, she declined the insulting offer, and announced that, if needs be, she would support her refusal by force.

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A more heroic resolve has never been taken by a small State since, in the ancient world, Athens and Sparta met the challenge of Persia and the East. The odds at the outset were tremendous, and let it be always remembered, let us never forget that the invasion of Belgium by Germany was not merely—I might almost say not mainly—a military campaign. The facts have been laid bare after exhaustive and impartial inquiry, and we now know that the military operations of Germany were deliberately supported by, and in some cases subordinated to, organised butchery and pillage of the civil population.

The carefully-planned massacres of men, women, and children, the sacking of industrious towns, the desecration and the wanton destruction of the most precious monuments to the piety and the artistic genius of the past—this infamous story which takes us back to the spirit and the methods of the Thirty Years' War will never be blotted from the memory of Belgium or from the escutcheon of Germany.

The Belgian Army resisted inch by inch the advance of overwhelming forces with tenacity, with endurance, with brilliant courage—for which, let me say, the two great Western Allies owe them an immeasurable debt of gratitude. With its heroic King still at its head, that Army, after a lapse of nearly two years, is still in Belgium, which neither the King nor his gallant troops have quitted. There they form an important link in the Allied line which holds Germany in check—well found in men and in munitions, and well able to cope with all the latest exigencies of modern war.

But I should like to pass for a moment from the Belgian Army to point out that not less admirable has been the spirit which continues to be shown by the Belgian civil population at home. Their patriotism has yielded neither to cajolery nor coercion, though it

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has been subjected to a full measure of both. As lately as last May—and I want if I can to bring this fact home to the knowledge of the whole civilised world—the German Governor-General issued a new decree to give increased stringency to the laws against Belgian workmen who refused to work for their oppressors.

There can be no doubt of the object. It is to enable the German invaders to requisition Belgian labour for their own military needs. This new decree imposes heavier penalties on those who refuse, and it contains, further, the remarkable provision I am about to read, and which, I hope, will be recorded everywhere :

This is the provision of the German decree :

“Instead of having recourse to penal prosecutions, the governors and military commandants may order that the recalcitrant workmen shall be led by force to the places where they are to work.”

In other words, they are to be treated as slaves.

This is the climax of a policy which has already resorted without success to starvation and to deportation to subdue the indomitable spirit of those brave men who refuse to become accomplices in the spoliation and oppression of their native land.

We here in Great Britain are taking note of these things. We do not mean to forget them. We intend to exact reparation for them.

In the meanwhile, the spectacle of the sufferings of these patient and stubborn victims of inhumanity and tyranny is exciting the sympathy, not only of the Allies, but of the whole neutral world.

I beg, in the name of the British people, to send through your Excellency a message on this memorable anniversary. Tell your compatriots that their example has inspired and stimulated the Allied nations and Armies. Tell them that we watch their sufferings with sympathy and their patience and courage with

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heartfelt admiration. Tell them, finally, that when the hour of deliverance comes—and come it will before long—it will be to us here in Great Britain a proud and an ennobling memory that we have had our share in restoring to them the freedom and independence to which no nation in the history of the world has ever shown a more indisputable title.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

At the Queen's Hall, August 4, 1916

TWO years ago, in the week or weeks which preceded the outbreak of War, Germany was the victim of a double delusion. She was absolutely certain that whatever we here might do or say in the way of protest we should never join France and Russia in arms. She was equally assured that the weak and, it seemed to her, defenceless kingdom of Belgium could be cajoled or coerced into allowing her what she most needed—a right of way into France. The calculation was that we here in Great Britain, having found or devised some formula of escape from our treaty obligations, would watch as detached spectators with more or less unmoved eyes, certainly with folded arms, the gradually unrolling spectacle of the devastation, if need be the enslavement, of Belgium, the spoliation of France, the practical annihilation of the whole system of free States in the west of the European Continent, and the setting up, at our very doors, of a dominating and menacing despotism.

That was a mistake, and, as it turned out, a very costly mistake, for in the two years that have since passed this Empire of ours—the most peace-loving family of communities on the face of the civilised globe—has raised and sent into the field five millions of its sons to frustrate those designs. That has been and is our answer to those who thought that they could safely treat us here as so wrapped up in the selfish pursuit of

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material prosperity, as so enervated by wealth, by comfort, by moral decay that we had lost both the sense of honour and the power to vindicate it at the risk of life. Never, even in the tangled and bungled web of German diplomacy, has there been an error so crude in conception and so disastrously fatal to its authors.

Germany—I am repeating a familiar point, but it is one which on an anniversary like this must be recalled—Germany had for more than a generation been held up by her native professors and by their dupes in other countries as the pre-eminent example of what a nation can achieve by organisation and intelligence. But what they did not allow for was that the systematised discipline of ideas and enterprise, carefully and skilfully managed by an omnipotent State, was aimed, not at the free self-development of individuals or communities or even at securing for Germany an adequate place in the sun, but at the subjugation of smaller States and the crippling of larger ones that might presume to stand in her way towards the domination of the Western world.

When, therefore, the glove was thrown down two years ago to-day and was taken up by the Allied Powers we very soon recognised—and we know it well to-day—that we had reached one of those epoch-making issues in **which** the contest is not between one Power and another, nor one group of Powers and another, but in which the contest is between separate and irreconcilable ideals; **between**, on the one side, the forces which stand for freedom, for variety of type and of organisation, for the unfettered progress of humanity, and on the other side the forces which are bound, sooner or later, to suppress and to sterilise all the possible deeds that transform and regenerate the world. I think there is a growing consciousness that this War is something more than a mere clash of arms and that that accounts for the new spirit

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which has been breathed into our nation. It is that spirit, tempered and strengthened by the ordeal of two years of stern and searching discipline, that to-night on this momentous anniversary fills every class of our fellow-subjects in every quarter of his Majesty's dominions.

I am not going to enter into a detailed survey of the various theatres of war on land and sea. I would rather concentrate your attention on one or two of the general aspects of the struggle which to-morrow enters on its third year. In the first place I should like to call attention—I am glad to do so in the presence of the representatives of our Allies—to the unbroken unity of the Allies.

As has often been pointed out, and as is true, the enemy for the time being was able to profit by the advantages, both military and political, that spring from all the operations, alike of war and diplomacy, being under a single control. The Allies are four independent Powers, each with habits of mind, forms of speech, traditions, methods of its own, and from the necessities of the case it followed that they must individually regard some of the problems which a war like this from time to time presents, if not from divergent angles, at least in a different perspective. Nothing has been more remarkable during the last year than the success with which the Allies have pursued a common policy and a united plan. That has been due, perhaps, to some extent to a simplification in our machinery, but I think it has been still more largely due to the direct and habitual personal intercourse between the statesmen and soldiers of the Allied Powers.

At any rate at this moment I am glad to be able to say—and I am sure I shall have the assent of all those sitting around me—that for all the purposes of the War there is complete concert between us. And you can

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have no better practical illustration of that undoubted fact than the concurrent offensive which is being now pushed with such vigour and success on no less than three fronts of the theatre of War.

Coming to ourselves, I think the most conspicuous and encouraging feature of the last year has been the enormous growth both in numbers and in quality of our fighting forces. I shall not revive—far be it from me—the various controversies about recruiting, but I think we shall all agree that the most glorious and stimulating fact in the creation of our new Army is the vast number of men of every station in life, drawn from every part of the United Kingdom and of the Dominions beyond the seas, who have voluntarily left their homes, their families, their callings, to risk their lives in the service of the State. I will venture to say that there is not a parent in this hall or in any similar assembly of Englishmen, Scotsmen, or Irishmen, with sons of military age, who has not during the past two years contributed, and contributed willingly and gladly, to the common effort of sacrifice.

No one knows better than our chairman that it was Lord Kitchener who, more than any other man, called that marvellous force into being, welded it into a compact and disciplined mass, and imbued it with his own unboasting but unconquerable spirit. In losing him we sustain a greater blow than the Germans have inflicted or will inflict upon us, but it is a consolation to those like myself who mourn and miss him most to know that he lived to see his handiwork all but complete. Those New Armies who, during the last month, have been gaining for themselves, officers and men alike, immortal honour on the blood-stained fields of Picardy—those New Armies are the best memorial Lord Kitchener could have won.

I have spoken of the Army. But what can I say of

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our debt, and the debt of our Allies also, to the British Navy? The Navy, like the Army, has been anxious to try conclusions with the enemy. The enemy took good care that their chances of doing so shall be few and far between. Since its glorious victory of the 31st of May the German High Sea Fleet, or what remains of it, has not ventured to emerge from its ports. It has shrunk, apparently, from repeating its triumphant experience. As I said at the time, a couple more of such victories and there would be nothing or very little left of the German Fleet.

But though our Navy is rarely indulged with a fair-and-square fight, let us never forget—we are too apt to forget—that it is the Navy, unobtrusive, silent, but always on the watch, with its ever-tightening grip, that is starving the German power of resistance and throttling the life of Germany. There has never in the whole of history been such a decisive proof of the supremacy, nay capital, importance of the command of the sea. I think we shall all agree that it was a wise and far-sighted policy that has led our statesmen of all parties and schools in the past to insist on the cardinal necessity for us of naval supremacy.

Just consider what has been the consequence of this War. We have been able to feed our soldiers. We continue to be supplied from oversea with the necessary materials for our industry; we have transported millions of troops over almost all the oceans of the world at practically no loss, and with the aid of our mercantile marine we are rendering the same services to all our Allies. All that has been done and is being done with practical immunity save for occasional loss from submarine activity, conducted as you know it is with a total disregard of all the laws and usages of war.

I have spoken of the Allies, I have spoken of ourselves.

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Let me, before I finish, say a word about the enemy. He is everywhere on the defensive. In none of the quarters, in none of the theatres of war does he retain or attempt to retain the initiative, and there are signs which can hardly be deceptive of material weakening and exhaustion. All the more reason that we, the Allies, should co-operate to maintain the struggle—naval, military, financial, moral—with increasing tenacity and unrelaxing will.

There is one feature in the later developments of the enemy's methods which seems, I confess, to my mind to indicate a sense of desperation—I mean the recrudescence of deliberate and calculated barbarity. The Belgian civil population, who refuse to work to maintain and improve the military position of their invaders and oppressors, to compel them to do so are literally being treated like slaves. The horrors of the recent deportations of large numbers of the inhabitants of the towns of Northern France, the midnight raids on private dwellings, the wholesale deportations of women and girls, is a story which, when it comes to be fully written, will be found to blacken even the besmirched annals of the German Army.

Nor can we here in England forget the latest infamy directed against ourselves, the judicial murder of Captain Fryatt, which has stirred the indignation and outraged the conscience of the whole civilised world. We are considering, in concert with our Allies, what are the most appropriate and effective methods of dealing with those atrocities, their authors, and the nation which condones, and not only condones, but applauds them. Remember it is a condition of any action taken now or hereafter, if it is to be really effective, that we must win the War.

That is the supreme object to which everything else is subordinate.

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I have said to "win the War." It is, I believe, the united opinion of the Allied General Staff that our prospects of victory have never been so bright nor so full of promise. We have seen during the last six weeks the brilliant Russian success in Galicia and the Bukovina. We have seen the complete failure of the Austrian offensive in the Trentino. We have seen the Turkish retirement in Armenia. We have seen the check—I think I may say the failure—of the German attack at Verdun. And we have seen the magnificent advance of the Allies on the Somme.

This is not the time for faint-heartedness, for petty criticism—for the rather contemptible procedure of seeking for a scapegoat, and certainly not for even a semblance of divided counsels and of a broken or wavering front. All that we, all that our Allies, all that our cause needs is concentration of purpose—and as far as we in this country are concerned the continued exercise throughout the kingdom and the Empire of the same unselfish far-sighted patriotism which is shown this week by the readiness of hundreds of thousands, nay millions of our best workers, men and women alike—many of them weary and hard-pressed with their past labours—to forgo their holiday.

Early in the war I quoted a sentence which Mr. Gladstone used in 1870. "The greatest triumph of our time," he said, "has been the enthronement of the idea of public right as the governing idea of European politics." Mr. Gladstone worked all his life for that noble purpose. He did not live to see its attainment. By the victory of the Allies, the enthronement of public right here in Europe will pass from the domain of ideals and of aspirations into that of concrete and achieved realities.

What does public right mean? I will tell you what I understand it to mean—an equal level of opportunity

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and of independence as between small States and great States, as between the weak and the strong ; safeguards resting upon the common will of Europe, and, I hope, not of Europe alone, against aggression, against international covetousness and bad faith, against the wanton recourse in case of dispute to the use of force and the disturbance of peace ; finally, as the result of it all, a great partnership of nations federated together in the joint pursuit of a freer and fuller life for countless millions who by their efforts and their sacrifice, generation after generation, maintain the progress and enrich the inheritance of humanity.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH

(Prime Minister)

In the House of Commons, Oct. 11, 1916

THE vote which I am about to propose is the fourth presented to the House of Commons for the services of the financial year 1916-17. The previous votes for this year have been:—February 21, £300,000,000; May 23, £300,000,000; July 24, £450,000,000. If the Committee agree to the Vote which is now submitted, namely, £300,000,000, the total for the current financial year will amount to £1,350,000,000. Perhaps it may be convenient that, as on previous occasions, I should summarise at the outset the total number and amounts of the Votes of Credit taken since the outbreak of the War. In the financial year 1914-15 three Votes were taken, amounting in all to £362,000,000. For the financial year 1915-16 six Votes were taken, amounting in the aggregate to £1,420,000,000. For the current year, if the Committee assent to the present Vote, we shall have four Votes, amounting to £1,350,000,000. The result is that the aggregate since the outbreak of the War, sanctioned by thirteen Votes, amounts to £3,132,000,000.

It is difficult, of course, to grasp the meaning of such a stupendous total, but it may perhaps make its significance clearer if the Committee is told that since the outbreak of the War Parliament has been asked to vote in Votes of Credit alone, without taking

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into account peace expenditure or Debt charges, a sum which is rather more than the aggregate of national expenditure for the twenty years which preceded the War—the years 1894–1913—a period which included the South African War.

One of the greatest of our political writers and thinkers, Edmund Burke, under conditions less strenuous and exacting than these, used words in his observations on the late state of the nation which seem to me not inappropriate to-day. He said, speaking of the attack of some critic of the Administration of the day:—“He sees nothing but the burden. I can perceive the burden as well as he; but I cannot avoid contemplating also the strength which supports it. From this,” said Burke, “I draw the most comfortable assurance for the future vigour and ample resources of this great country.”

When I moved the last Vote of Credit, on July 24, I stated to the Committee that the average rate of expenditure from Votes of Credit was then approximately £5,000,000 a day; but on the figures which I then gave the Government did not feel justified in assuming that the daily expenditure from Votes of Credit in the immediate future would be less than that figure. On this basis it was anticipated that the Vote of Credit then proposed for £450,000,000 would last to the end of October. I will now tell the Committee what has actually happened since. By that Vote on July 24, as appears from the figures which I have already given, the House of Commons raised the total agreed to for the current year to £1,050,000,000. Up to Saturday last, October 7, which is the end of the last day of the last completed week, the expenditure chargeable against the Vote of Credit under all heads amounted approximately to £949,500,000. Accordingly at the beginning of the present week there was still in

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hand out of Supplies voted by Parliament £100,500,000, a sum which, according to our present calculations, will suffice to carry on the public services to October 27. The forecast which I made in July, therefore, has proved to be almost exactly correct.

Now the Committee will like some information as to details. In my statement on July 24 I analysed the expenditure out of the Votes of Credit for the current financial year, and I compared the figures for the period April 1 to May 20—50 days—with those for the period from May 21 to July 22—63 days, as well as the aggregate for the two periods—113 days. I will not go back to those figures, but I will remind the Committee of what the aggregate for the 113 days of the current financial year was. During those 113 days Navy, Army, and Munitions accounted for £379,000,000; loans to Allies and Dominions, £157,000,000; food supplies, railways, and other miscellaneous items, £23,000,000, making a total of £559,000,000 in 113 days.

We have now to deal with the time which has since elapsed—from July 23 to October 7, that is, 77 days. During that time the expenditure under the correspondence heads has been:—Navy, Army, and Munitions, £284,500,000; loans to Allies and Dominions, £96,000,000; food supplies, railways, and miscellaneous, £10,000,000, making a total of £390,000,000 for the 77 days. It follows that, taking the whole period from April 1 to October 7—190 days—the expenditure on Navy, Army, and Munitions amounted to £663,500,000; loans to Allies and Dominions, £253,000,000; food supplies and miscellaneous items, £33,000,000, an aggregate of £949,500,000. We will call it roughly £950,000,000.

Perhaps it will be convenient, as before, to reduce those figures to daily averages. As I said in my last

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Statement, the average daily expenditure out of Vote of Credit for the first 113 days of the year was about £4,920,000. In the 77 days which have since elapsed the average expenditure has risen slightly, and amounts to £5,070,000 per day. The average for the whole period of 190 days works out almost exactly to £5,000,000 per day. Let us see how these daily averages arrange themselves among the different items. The Navy, Army, and Munitions at that time were costing us approximately £3,600,000 a day, which includes £220,000 a day, our normal peace expenditure for those services. For the 77 days which have since passed the average has only slightly increased. The Navy, Army, and Munitions expenditure has been £3,690,000 per day. The expenditure on the Navy has been practically constant throughout; the expenditure on the Army shows a slight falling off; and the expenditure on munitions has, as was anticipated, been somewhat increased.

The next item, and a very important one, is that of loans to Allies and Dominions, which I may remind the House, for the whole period from April 1 to October 7, amounts to £253,000,000. In this respect I ought to tell the House experience shows that we are exceeding the Budget estimate. If this item goes on at the present rate, £450,000,000, which was the sum the Chancellor of the Exchequer put down under that head in his Budget estimate, will be very substantially exceeded. I should like to say here that there is no part of our expenditure in these Votes of Credit which is of more importance to the Allied cause than that which falls under this head. We have no selfish interest in the matter. We are not profiting by it. Some people think we are. We are not. We are supplying what nobody else could supply. We are supplying credits, the means of obtaining the necessities of war in America and elsewhere, to our

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comrades in arms, which, if we did not make this provision, would be absolutely unprocurable by them. Although the expenditure under this head is growing beyond the careful estimate of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it is an expenditure which I do not regret, which I do not think they will regret, and which I am perfectly sure this House will not ask the Government to curtail.

The experience of the period under review can be summarised in this way :—Navy expenditure stationary, a slight reduction in Army expenditure, which may be temporary—as far as we can foresee the period covered by this Vote of Credit, we do not anticipate any very great expansion of expenditure under that head ; a substantial increase on munitions, but, considering the enormous part the artillery of the Allies has played and is playing, I believe every one will agree that that expenditure is well warranted.

So much for the past. To come to the Vote now before the House, the sum we ask for is £300,000,000. After what I have stated, I think every one will agree that we should not be safe in assuming that the daily expenditure in the near future will be less than £5,000,000. The old Vote of Credit, as I explained, is likely to be exhausted about October 27. On a daily basis of £5,000,000, a Vote for £300,000,000 will be sufficient to carry on the public services for the purposes of the war, apart from any unexpected development, for sixty days—that is to say, till Christmas.

In other respects the Vote of Credit follows the precedent of all previous Votes, with one exception—namely, that it makes provision for additional allowances already announced which the Government have agreed to grant to old age pensioners who are suffering special hardships due to the high prices of food and other conditions arising out of the War.

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I have now dealt with the financial aspect of the matter, and I think the Committee will be glad to have from the Government what I propose very briefly to give, a general survey, from information supplied to me by the General Staff, of the progress of the War since the last Vote of Credit was sanctioned. This will necessarily be of a somewhat cursory character. I will begin with what we call the secondary period.

In Mesopotamia the hot weather of the past month has hampered active operations, but substantial progress has been made in the improvement of our rail and river communications. The health of the troops is also greatly improved. General Maude assumed command of the forces in Mesopotamia on August 28, and his most recent reports indicate that real headway has been made in overcoming the difficulties which have hitherto hampered our operations in that territory. In Egypt the chief event of importance has been the Turkish attack on our forces at the Katia oasis on August 3, which resulted in the complete defeat of the Turks, with a loss of 3,164 prisoners and four guns. In spite of the great heat, our troops pursued the defeated enemy, forcing him to evacuate the Katia district and to fall back for a distance of twenty miles to the East. This success has gone far to remove the danger of attack on the Canal and has impaired Turkish prestige in Syria and Arabia. The weather has not allowed of any extended operations since, but steady progress has been and is being made with the railway from the Suez Canal to Katia. On the Western front of Egypt the Senussi have been reduced to impotence. This, combined with the operations undertaken by the Sirdar of Darfur, has put an effectual check on the Turco-German intrigue in Western Egypt and the Sudan.

At Salonika the Allied Forces, having received considerable reinforcements of Italian and Russian

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troops, assumed the offensive early in September, with the object of combining their action with that of the Russians and Rumanians in Transylvania and the Dobrudja. This offensive has met with a considerable measure of success. On the right flank the British troops have established themselves on the left bank of the Struma, where they have captured several Bulgarian positions and have repulsed repeated counter-attacks and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. On the left bank the French, Russians, and Serbians have defeated the Bulgarians and taken Florina, driving the enemy from the frontier heights, and are now within eight miles of the important town of Monastir. Our operations in that sphere have not only entailed heavy losses on the enemy, but have prevented him from transferring troops from Macedonia to the Dobrudja, and have rendered valuable assistance to our Russian and Rumanian Allies.

In East Africa our troops, under the command of General Smuts, have in the course of a most skilfully-conducted but most arduous campaign, driven the enemy south of the Central Railway, which is entirely in our hands, and we have occupied the whole coast line. The enemy's forces have been separated and compelled to retire in divergent directions and are unable to conduct combined operations. The main enemy force has been driven into the lower Rufigi Delta, an extremely unhealthy area, where it is likely to lose heavily from sickness. In these operations it is a source of the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to His Majesty's Government, as I am sure it will be to this House and the whole country, to know that the Belgian troops have rendered great assistance by their ably-conducted advance from Lake Tanganyika and from Ruanda, and by the capture of the important centre of Tabora, on

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the Central Railway. We shall all wish to acknowledge very gratefully the most effective co-operation of our Belgian Allies. The difficulty of the country, the advent of the rains, and the necessity of organising our communications may entail some delay before the enemy is completely rounded up, but all the most valuable part of the Colony, together with the main communications, are in our hands, and its complete conquest is, in the view of the Military Authorities, only a matter of time. We have employed in these operations native troops from Nigeria, British East Africa, and the Cape with marked success, and we are now raising more, in addition to a considerable contingent of coloured labourers. We shall thus be less dependent on the white troops, who are not adapted for operations in an unhealthy tropical climate.

In the Western theatre the combined British and French offensive began on July 1. By the end of July our Forces had established themselves on the ridge between Thiépval and Combles, which formed our immediate objective.

During August we gradually and methodically extended those gains and improved our positions with the view of preparing for a further advance. During the earlier part of September we completed the occupation of the ridge by the capture of Ginchy and Guillemont, which prepared the way for the general attack of September 15. By this attack we carried our line farther on the northern slopes of the ridge, and on the low ground beyond captured the villages of Martinpuich and Courcelette. A further advance on the 26th gave us Combles—which we captured in conjunction with the French—Morval, Lesbœufs, Gueudecourt, and the strongly fortified position of Thiépval. Since then we have made further progress at various points, capturing the villages

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of Le Sars and Eaucourt l'Abbaye. By these operations we advanced a distance of some seven miles on a front of nine miles, taking in succession a series of strongly-defended lines all of which the enemy has been nearly two years in strengthening by every means in his power. The most notable feature of the operations is the steady progress made, and the fact, the most important fact, that in no case have the enemy's counter-attacks succeeded in driving us from any position we have captured. Our artillery has obtained a great superiority over that of the enemy, and our aircraft have gained a complete mastery in the air.

The immediate and already realised results of our offensive have been to compel the enemy practically to abandon the attack on Verdun and to leave on the Western front large forces which were destined for operations in the East. We have thus rendered valuable assistance to our friends on the East as well as to the French. In addition to these results the enemy has suffered very heavy losses, which have proved a severe strain on his resources, and by his continued retirement an injurious effect has been inflicted on his moral and on the prestige of German arms. What we have got to do there is steadily and continually to press on.

It will interest the Committee to know that the total captures of the Allies on the Somme are : Prisoners, 60,474 ; guns, 304 ; machine-guns, 1,050. The British share of these captures was : Prisoners, 28,050 ; guns, 121 ; machine-guns, 397.

Sir Douglas Haig, reviewing these operations the other day, summarised them in this way. He said : " All arms and all services have proved fully equal to the task, and the ability of our new Armies and of all arms from all parts of the Empire not only to drive the enemy from the strongest entrenchments

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by assault, but to maintain the offensive under the most difficult conditions for many months, has been placed beyond all question."

I have confined this rapid survey to the theatres in which our own Armies are engaged. In the West we are working in close contact and daily co-operation, literally shoulder to shoulder, with the gallant and invincible Army of France. But we watch day by day with sympathetic interest and pride the magnificent contribution of valour, of tenacity, of strategical skill, which is being made to the common cause of the Allies in more distant fields by Russia and by Italy. There is, as I have said before, complete intimacy and mutual confidence between the General Staff of the four Powers, with the resulting co-ordination of purpose and of purport. I spoke of the four Powers, but our gratitude is equally due and is equally warm to the smaller States which have recognised that both interest and duty call upon them to play their parts in a struggle upon which their whole future hangs. Belgium—Serbia—and now Rumania, whose King and people, in defiance of a thousand calls to a pusillanimous and self-regarding neutrality, joined our cause, and are spending their best blood on behalf of the threatened independence of small nationalities.

I wish I could add Greece—Greece, with her imperishable record of stubborn and victorious resistance to the inrush of barbarism and tyranny, Greece, of whose fortunes and liberties we have been for the best part of a century the stanch protectors. I can only say that even now, wisely guided and governed, Greece may yet take a worthy part on the side to which she is committed by all that is great and glorious in the traditions of her past. Do not let us forget that our ancient Ally, the oldest Ally we have in the world, the Republic of Portugal, whose activity has from

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the very first been staunch to her alliance with us and to the cause of the Triple Entente, has rendered most conspicuous and glorious service.

I was going to say, in my judgment and in the judgment of His Majesty's Government, this is not the moment, and I think it follows from the survey I have given, for faltering purpose or wavering counsel. War is, as we now know too well, terrible in its waste of life, justified only by the greatness of its cause. That greatness is measured not merely by the costliness of the sacrifices which the nation is ready to incur, but more by the worthiness of the end for which those sacrifices are poured out. The strain which the war imposes on ourselves and our Allies, the hardships which we freely admit it involves to some of those who are not directly concerned in the struggle, the upheaval of trade, the devastation of territory, the loss of irreplaceable lives; this long and sombre procession of cruelty and suffering, lighted up as it is by deathless examples of heroism and chivalry, cannot be allowed to end in some patched-up, precarious, dishonouring compromise, masquerading under the name of peace. No one desires to prolong for a single unnecessary day the tragic spectacle of bloodshed and destruction, but we owe it to those who have given their lives for us in the flower of their youth, in the hope and promise of the future, that their supreme sacrifice shall not be in vain. The ends of the Allies are well known; they have been frequently and precisely stated. They are not selfish ends, they are not vindictive ends, but they require that there should be adequate reparation for the past and adequate security for the future. On their achievement we in this country honestly believe depends the best hopes of humanity. For them we have given—we are giving—what we can least afford to give—without stint, without

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regret, not only as the price by which the world will purchase and surely hold in the years to come—protection for the weak, supremacy of Right over Force, free development under equal conditions, and each in accordance with its own genius, of all the States, great or small, which build up the family of civilised mankind.

Rt. Hon. H. H. ASQUITH
(Prime Minister)

At the Guildhall, November 9, 1916

YOU, my Lord Mayor, have said this is the ninth year in succession in which it has been my duty and my privilege to respond in the Guildhall to this toast. So far as my memory serves me, upon each occasion there have been at the time special and exceptional causes for anxiety, or at least disquietude, either domestic or external. I remember, years ago, acclaiming with premature and, as events have proved, ill-founded satisfaction the triumph of what was called the Young Turk Movement over the spy-ridden and blood-stained tyranny of Abdul Hamid. We hoped in those days for the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire from within. Our hopes have been falsified and frustrated, and I believe we all now realise that the continuance of Turkish rule in Europe, where the Turk has always been a stranger and intruder, has already come to mean, and if it is allowed to persist, will increasingly mean that the Turk is there only as a vassal and a subservient agent of German interest and ambitions.

Allow me to give you one practical illustration, and it is a very tragic one. Among the enslaved races who have suffered most from the Ottoman domination are the Armenians, the wholesale massacre of whom during the last two years has shocked the entire civilised and Christian world. In our own country, in Russia, and I believe even more in the United States of America, the

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incredible sufferings of this nation have aroused profound sympathy, and all three countries have raised large sums for their relief and their repatriation in the future. I need not say that His Majesty's Government look with profound sympathy on these efforts, and are resolved that after the War there shall be an era of liberty and redemption for this ancient people. But Germany, the master of Turkey, who by lifting a finger could have arrested, and, if she wished, prevented this organised campaign of outrage and massacre against a Christian people—Germany has looked on unmoved, quiescent, for all we know complacent. That is a significant example of what is meant by a Germanised Turkey.

I remember also uttering in this hall, as a guest of one of your predecessors, a protest on behalf of the public law of Europe against the unauthorised and unsanctioned breach of that law in the appropriation by the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These events now belong to the history of the past; but, though we did not, and could not, foresee it then, they helped our enemies in a way to prepare and to mature the seed-bed of the troubles that are now afflicting Europe, and which threaten, unless we successfully intervene, the bankruptcy of civilisation. In making that brief review, I purposely say nothing of our own old differences here at home. They were serious, they were acute. They divided parties. They aroused deep-seated and widespread animosities among us; but real as they were—for Englishmen do not fight about trifles—they are now one and all submerged, buried, may I not say they are now extinct, under the constraining stress of the greatest issue in our history.

I am not going to-night to attempt any survey of the naval and military situation. Our Fleet, of which my right hon. friend and colleague has spoken, remote

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and unadvertised, but vigilant and omnipresent, maintains an ever-tightening grip on the inlets of enemy supplies, and is ready, and more than ready whenever the opportunity offers, to try conclusions with him on the open seas. Our gallant Armies, of which Lord French has spoken, in all the different theatres have never shown more conspicuously their title to maintain and illuminate and transcend the best traditions of our past, and in this titanic struggle on the Somme, with its daily record of unforgettable examples of personal and corporate heroism, they are ever gaining ground and never yielding an inch. At Salonika and in Egypt, in Mesopotamia and in East Africa, further removed though they are from the immediate ken of their countrymen, their record is the same.

And what of our Allies? France is fighting shoulder to shoulder with us on the Somme; and, as we have been already reminded to-night, in the course of little more than a fortnight she has annihilated the whole result of eight months of prodigious and costly effort by the enemy before Verdun. Italy is steadily and surely advancing on Trieste. Russia maintains with undiminished energy and valour her colossal task. Japan has achieved great things already, and is powerfully supporting, by supplies and in other ways, the common effort. Let me associate myself with what the French Ambassador has said of our latest Ally, Rumania, to whom we offer a special tribute of gratitude and admiration for her splendid and tenacious stand. The Serbians are playing a worthy part, and have never more honourably displayed the indomitable qualities of their race. Portugal, our most ancient Ally, is contributing her share to the common cause.

With regard to another country—Greece—I speak with hope, and I wish I could speak with confidence. As all the world knows we and our French Allies did

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not go to Salonika as invaders and trespassers. We went there with the assent of the Greek Government and as the friends of both Serbia and Greece. We have not, we never have had, any quarrel—on the contrary, we have a sincere and traditional friendship with Greece as one of the Guaranteeing Powers of her independence and freedom. We desire at one and the same time to prevent her being enmeshed in the German net and to save her from the calamities of intestine strife. Whatever the measures, apparently of a drastic character, the Allies have taken have been dictated solely by the necessity of preventing Athens from becoming, or rather I ought to say from continuing to be, the focus and centre of German propaganda and intrigue.

I say quite frankly—it is no good mincing words about this—I say quite frankly, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, we are in hearty sympathy with that great Greek patriot, M. Venizelos. He has assured us, and we fully accept his assurance, that his efforts and his organisation have no anti-dynastic purpose. His governing, I believe his sole, object is that in this world struggle the Greeks shall play a worthy part on the side of freedom and in the progressive development on the lines of independence and of liberty of the Eastern European communities. This is a War among other things, perhaps I may say primarily, a War for the emancipation of the smaller States. How can Greece in such a conflict stand aside? The one aim of the Allies and of those who, like ourselves, are Guaranteeing Powers, is that we should be once more in the position with regard to Greece in which we stood with M. Venizelos as Prime Minister when we went to Salonika. It was Hellas who first among the nations of Europe lit the torch of liberty and withstood the onslaught of Eastern barbarism and tyranny. Barbarism and tyranny are the secular enemies of what is best in

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humanity, whether they issue from the East or the West, whether they come naked and unabashed as in the old days or whether they come, as they do now, draped and disguised in the costume of culture. May Greece rekindle her lamp and show herself worthy of her immortal past !

Let me, before I end, say a few words on the more general aspect of the situation. Our enemies, as Lord French has said, are great organisers and fine fighters in the field of war ; but they are also, I will not say skilful, but indefatigable, workers in a far different sphere—the sphere of propaganda. In that sphere, a very important one for their purpose, they have the double object of dividing the Allies and, if they can, of capturing neutral opinion for themselves.

Let me deal in a sentence with the second point first. It is suggested in neutral countries that we Allies have a sinister design after the War is over to combine against them, and to build up an impenetrable stone wall against their trade. That is a childish fiction, for if it were true it would mean that we are, one and all, bent on economic suicide. It ought to be unnecessary to affirm, but I am afraid it is necessary to affirm, that when the time comes for peace nothing will be more essential to the Allies from the standpoint of simple self-interest than to establish and maintain the best industrial and financial relations with the neutral Powers.

The real purpose of German propaganda being, as we know it is, in each of the belligerent countries, to incite a movement in favour of a separate peace, different arguments are put forward in different places. Here, for instance, in Great Britain, it was insinuated that Germany is prepared to restore the independence of Belgium and to give her compensation, that on that basis a reasonable peace could be secured, so far as the particular British *casus belli* is concerned,

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and that we are being dragged on by our Allies into a continuation of the War in order to secure the special aspirations, say, of France or Russia or Italy, in which we have no direct concern or interest. Let me observe, in passing, that we are equally pledged to the reconstitution and independence of Serbia, and, so far as I am aware, no German propagandist here has even suggested that the German Government is prepared to concede anything to this demand.

But I wish to declare on behalf of the Government of Great Britain, without hesitation or reserve, that the Allies are fighting for a common cause; that for the purposes of the War their interests are our interests, as we believe that our interests are theirs; and that a victory which will secure them all is, in our judgment, the essential condition of a lasting and enduring peace.

In the Allied countries, and particularly perhaps in Russia, the method of the German propagandist is just the reverse. There we are represented as the Power which is anxious to continue the War and to prevent the possibility either of a separate or a general peace. We are held out as lending money to the Allies on usurious terms, as making huge profits out of the munitions and other commodities which we supply, and out of the shipping in which they are carried; as fulfilling the traditional rôle ascribed to us more than a hundred years ago by Napoleon as "a nation of hucksters and shopkeepers," as exploiting without scruple or measure the necessities of our brother-combatants. It is difficult for us here to imagine that this can be regarded as a plausible or even a credible hypothesis—for us, who know with much better knowledge what the War actually means to us day by day, the upheaval of our whole national life, the absorption and extinction of thousands of millions of accumulated and prospective wealth, the tribute which almost every family amor g

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us is paying in precious lives, of hopes hardly yet in blossom or in their earliest flower, in the unceasing and pitiless drain upon our reservoir of potential promise and vitality. Who has greater reason than we have to long and pray for peace ?

Peace, yes ; but on one condition only, that the War—with its waste and sacrifices, its untold sufferings, its glorious and undying examples of courage and unselfishness—shall not have been in vain. There can be no question of any separate peace. And the peace when it comes, be it soon or be it late—and I will not disguise from you for a moment my conviction that the struggle will tax all our resources and our whole stock of patience and resolve—the peace when it comes must be such as will build upon a sure and stable foundation the security of the weak, the liberties of Europe, and a free future for the world.

Rt. Hon. SIR EDWARD GREY

(Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)

In the House of Commons, Aug. 3, 1914

LAST week I stated that we were working for peace not only for this country, but to preserve the peace of Europe. To-day events move so rapidly that it is exceedingly difficult to state with technical accuracy the actual state of affairs, but it is clear that the peace of Europe cannot be preserved. Russia and Germany, at any rate, have declared war upon each other.

Before I proceed to state the position of His Majesty's Government, I would like to clear the ground so that, before I come to state to the House what our attitude is with regard to the present crisis, the House may know exactly under what obligations the Government is, or the House can be said to be, in coming to a decision on the matter. First of all let me say, very shortly, that we have consistently worked with a single mind, with all the earnestness in our power, to preserve peace. The House may be satisfied on that point. We have always done it. During these last years, as far as His Majesty's Government are concerned, we would have no difficulty in proving that we have done so. Throughout the Balkan crisis, by general admission, we worked for peace. The co-operation of the Great Powers of Europe was successful in working for peace in the Balkan crisis. It is true that some of the Powers had great difficulty in adjusting their

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points of view. It took much time and labour and discussion before they could settle their differences, but peace was secured, because peace was their main object, and they were willing to give time and trouble rather than accentuate differences rapidly.

In the present crisis, it has not been possible to secure the peace of Europe; because there has been little time, and there has been a disposition—at any rate in some quarters on which I will not dwell—to force things rapidly to an issue, at any rate, to the great risk of peace, and, as we now know, the result of that is that the policy of peace, as far as the Great Powers are concerned, is in danger. I do not want to dwell on that, and to comment on it, and to say where the blame seems to lie, which Powers were most in favour of peace, which were most disposed to risk or endanger peace, because I would like the House to approach this crisis in which we are now, from the point of view of British interests, British honour, and British obligations, free from all passion as to why peace has not been preserved.

We shall publish Papers as soon as we can regarding what took place last week when we were working for peace; and when those Papers are published, I have no doubt that to every human being they will make it clear how strenuous and genuine and whole-hearted our efforts for peace were, and that they will enable people to form their own judgment as to what forces were at work which operated against peace.

I come first, now, to the question of British obligations. I have assured the House—and the Prime Minister has assured the House more than once—that if any crisis such as this arose, we should come before the House of Commons and be able to say to the House that it was free to decide what the British attitude should be, that we would have no secret engagement which we

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would spring upon the House, and tell the House that, because we had entered into that engagement, there was an obligation of honour upon the country. I will deal with that point to clear the ground first.

There has been in Europe two diplomatic groups, the Triple Alliance and what came to be called the "Triple Entente" for some years past. The Triple Entente was not an Alliance—it was a diplomatic group. The House will remember that in 1908 there was a crisis, also a Balkan crisis, originating in the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Russian Minister, M. Isvolsky, came to London, or happened to come to London, because his visit was planned before the crisis broke out. I told him definitely then, this being a Balkan crisis, a Balkan affair, I did not consider that public opinion in this country would justify us in promising to give anything more than diplomatic support. More was never asked from us, more was never given, and more was never promised.

In this present crisis, up till yesterday, we have also given no promise of anything more than diplomatic support—up till yesterday no promise of more than diplomatic support. Now I must make this question of obligation clear to the House. I must go back to the first Moroccan crisis of 1906. That was the time of the Algeiras Conference, and it came at a time of very great difficulty to His Majesty's Government when a General Election was in progress, and Ministers were scattered over the country, and I—spending three days a week in my constituency and three days at the Foreign Office—was asked the question whether, if that crisis developed into war between France and Germany, we would give armed support. I said then that I could promise nothing to any foreign Power unless it was subsequently to receive the whole-hearted support of public opinion here if the occasion

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arose. I said, in my opinion, if war was forced upon France then on the question of Morocco—a question which had just been the subject of agreement between this country and France, an agreement exceedingly popular on both sides—that if out of that agreement war was forced on France at that time, in my view public opinion in this country would have rallied to the material support of France.

I gave no promise, but I expressed that opinion during the crisis, as far as I remember, almost in the same words, to the French Ambassador and the German Ambassador at the time. I made no promise, and I used no threats; but I expressed that opinion. That position was accepted by the French Government, but they said to me at the time—and I think very reasonably—“If you think it possible that the public opinion of Great Britain might, should a sudden crisis arise, justify you in giving to France the armed support which you cannot promise in advance, you will not be able to give that support, even if you wish to give it, when the time comes, unless some ‘conversations have already taken place between Naval and Military experts.’” There was force in that. I agreed to it, and authorised those conversations to take place, but on the distinct understanding that nothing which passed between Military or Naval experts should bind either Government or restrict in any way their freedom to make a decision as to whether or not they would give that support when the time arose.

As I have told the House, upon that occasion a General Election was in prospect. I had to take the responsibility of doing that without the Cabinet. It could not be summoned. An answer had to be given. I consulted Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Prime Minister; I consulted, I remember, Lord Haldane, who was then Secretary of State for War, and the

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present Prime Minister, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer. That was the most I could do, and they authorised that on the distinct understanding that it left the hands of the Government free whenever the crisis arose. The fact that conversations between Military and Naval experts took place was later on—I think much later on, because that crisis passed, and the thing ceased to be of importance—but later on it was brought to the knowledge of the Cabinet.

The Agadir crisis came—another Morocco crisis—and throughout that I took precisely the same line that had been taken in 1906. But subsequently, in 1912, after discussion and consideration in the Cabinet, it was decided that we ought to have a definite understanding in writing, which was to be only in the form of an unofficial letter, that these conversations which took place were not binding upon the freedom of either Government; and on November 22, 1912, I wrote to the French Ambassador the letter which I will now read to the House, and I received from him a letter in similar terms in reply. The letter which I have to read to the House is this, and it will be known to the public now as the record that, whatever took place between Military and Naval experts, they were not binding engagements upon the Government:

“My dear Ambassador,—From time to time in recent years the French and British naval and military experts have consulted together. It has always been understood that such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation between experts is not and ought not to be regarded as an engagement that commits either Government to action in a contingency that has not yet arisen and may never arise. The disposition, for instance, of the French and British Fleets respectively at the present moment is not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war.

“You have, however, pointed out that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by

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a third Power, it might become essential to know whether it could in that event depend upon the armed assistance of the other.

"I agree that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, or something that threatened the general peace, it should immediately discuss with the other whether both Governments should act together to prevent aggression and to preserve peace, and if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common."

LORD CHARLES BERESFORD: What is the date of that?

SIR E. GREY: November 22, 1912. That is the starting-point for the Government with regard to the present crisis. I think it makes it clear that what the Prime Minister and I said to the House of Commons was perfectly justified, and that, as regards our freedom to decide in a crisis what our line should be, whether we should intervene or whether we should abstain, the Government remained perfectly free and, a fortiori, the House of Commons remains perfectly free. That I say to clear the ground from the point of view of obligation. I think it was due to prove our good faith to the House of Commons that I should give that full information to the House now, and say what I think is obvious from the letter I have just read, that we do not construe anything which has previously taken place in our diplomatic relations with other Powers in this matter as restricting the freedom of the Government to decide what attitude they should take now, or restrict the freedom of the House of Commons to decide what their attitude should be.

Well, Sir, I will go further, and I will say this: The situation in the present crisis is not precisely the same as it was in the Morocco question. In the Morocco question it was primarily a dispute which concerned

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France—a dispute, as it seemed to us, affecting France, out of an agreement subsisting between us and France, and published to the whole world, in which we engaged to give France diplomatic support. No doubt we were pledged to give nothing but diplomatic support; we were, at any rate, pledged by a definite public agreement to stand with France diplomatically in that question.

The present crisis has originated differently. It has not originated with regard to Morocco. It has not originated as regards anything with which we had a special agreement with France; it has not originated with anything which primarily concerned France. It has originated in a dispute between Austria and Serbia. I can say this with the most absolute confidence—no Government and no country has less desire to be involved in war over a dispute with Austria and Serbia than the Government and the country of France. They are involved in it because of their obligation of honour under a definite alliance with Russia. Well, it is only fair to say to the House that that obligation of honour cannot apply in the same way to us. We are not parties to the Franco-Russian Alliance. We do not even know the terms of that Alliance. So far I have, I think, faithfully and completely cleared the ground with regard to the question of obligation.

I now come to what we think the situation requires of us. For many years we have had a long-standing friendship with France. I remember well the feeling in the House—and my own feeling—for I spoke on the subject, I think, when the late Government made their agreement with France—the warm and cordial feeling resulting from the fact that these two nations, who had had perpetual differences in the past, had cleared these differences away. I remember saying, I

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think, that it seemed to me that some benign influence had been at work to produce the cordial atmosphere that had made that possible. But how far that friendship entails obligation—it has been a friendship between the nations and ratified by the nations—how far that entails an obligation let every man look into his own heart, and his own feelings, and construe the extent of the obligation for himself. I construe it myself as I feel it, but I do not wish to urge upon anyone else more than their feelings dictate as to what they should feel about the obligation. The House, individually and collectively, may judge for itself. I speak my personal view, and I have given the House my own feeling in the matter.

The French Fleet is now in the Mediterranean, and the Northern and Western coasts of France are absolutely undefended. The French Fleet being concentrated in the Mediterranean, the situation is very different from what it used to be, because the friendship which has grown up between the two countries has given them a sense of security that there was nothing to be feared from us. The French coasts are absolutely undefended. The French Fleet is in the Mediterranean, and has for some years been concentrated there because of the feeling of confidence and friendship which has existed between the two countries. My own feeling is that if a foreign fleet engaged in a war which France had not sought, and in which she had not been the aggressor, came down the English Channel and bombarded and battered the undefended coasts of France, we could not stand aside and see this going on practically within sight of our eyes, with our arms folded, looking on dispassionately, doing nothing! I believe that would be the feeling of this country. There are times when one feels that if these circumstances actually did arise, it would be a feeling which would spread with irresistible force throughout the land.

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But I also want to look at the matter without sentiment, and from the point of view of British interests, and it is on that that I am going to base and justify what I am presently going to say to the House. If we say nothing at this moment, what is France to do—with her Fleet in the Mediterranean? If she leaves it there, with no statement from us as to what we will do, she leaves her Northern and Western coasts absolutely undefended, at the mercy of a German fleet coming down the Channel, to do as it pleases in a War which is a war of life and death between them. If we say nothing, it may be that the French Fleet is withdrawn from the Mediterranean. We are in the presence of a European conflagration; can anybody set limits to the consequences that may arise out of it? Let us assume that to-day we stand aside in an attitude of neutrality, saying: "No, we cannot undertake and engage to help either party in this conflict." Let us suppose that the French Fleet is withdrawn from the Mediterranean; and let us assume that the consequences—which are already tremendous in what has happened in Europe even to countries which are at peace—in fact, equally whether countries are at peace or at war—let us assume that out of that come consequences unforeseen, which make it necessary at a sudden moment that, in defence of vital British interests, we should go to war: and let us assume—which is quite possible—that Italy, who is now neutral, because, as I understand, she considers that this War is an aggressive war, and the Triple Alliance being a defensive alliance her obligation did not arise—let us assume that consequences which are not yet foreseen—and which perfectly legitimately consulting her own interests—make Italy depart from her attitude of neutrality at a time when we are forced in defence of vital British interests ourselves to fight, what then will be the

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position in the Mediterranean? It might be that at some critical moment those consequences would be forced upon us because our trade routes in the Mediterranean might be vital to this country.

Nobody can say that in the course of the next few weeks there is any particular trade route the keeping open of which may not be vital to this country. What will be our position then? We have not kept a Fleet in the Mediterranean which is equal to dealing alone with a combination of other fleets in the Mediterranean. It would be the very moment when we could not detach more ships to the Mediterranean, and we might have exposed this country from our negative attitude at the present moment to the most appalling risk. I say that from the point of view of British interests. We feel strongly that France was entitled to know—and to know at once—whether or not, in the event of attack upon her unprotected Northern and Western coasts, she could depend upon British support. In that emergency, and in these compelling circumstances, yesterday afternoon I gave to the French Ambassador the following statement:—

“I am authorised to give an assurance that if the German Fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against the French coasts or shipping, the British Fleet will give all the protection in its power. This assurance is, of course, subject to the policy of His Majesty's Government receiving the support of Parliament, and must not be taken as binding His Majesty's Government to take any action until the above contingency of action by the German Fleet takes place.”

I read that to the House, not as a declaration of war on our part, not as entailing immediate aggressive action on our part, but as binding us to take aggressive action should that contingency arise. Things move very hurriedly from hour to hour. Fresh news comes in; and I cannot give this in any very formal way; but

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I understand that the German Government would be prepared, if we would pledge ourselves to neutrality, to agree that its Fleet would not attack the Northern coast of France. I have only heard that shortly before I came to the House, but it is far too narrow an engagement for us. And, Sir, there is the more serious consideration—becoming more serious every hour—there is the question of the neutrality of Belgium.

I shall have to put before the House at some length what is our position in regard to Belgium. The governing factor is the Treaty of 1839, but this is a Treaty with a history—a history accumulated since. In 1870, when there was war between France and Germany, the question of the neutrality of Belgium arose, and various things were said. Amongst other things, Prince Bismarck gave an assurance to Belgium that, confirming his verbal assurance, he gave in writing a declaration which he said was superfluous in reference to the Treaty in existence—that the German Confederation and its allies would respect the neutrality of Belgium, it being always understood that that neutrality would be respected by the other belligerent Powers. That is valuable as a recognition in 1870 on the part of Germany of the sacredness of these Treaty rights.

What was our own attitude? The people who laid down the attitude of the British Government were Lord Granville in the House of Lords, and Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons. Lord Granville, on August 8, 1870, used these words. He said:—

“We might have explained to the country and to foreign nations that we did not think this country was bound either morally or internationally or that its interests were concerned in the maintenance of the neutrality of Belgium: though this course might have had some conveniences, though it might have been easy to adhere to it, though it might have saved us from some immediate danger, it is a course which Her Majesty’s Government thought it

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impossible to adopt in the name of the country with any due regard to the country's honour or to the country's interests."

Mr. Gladstone spoke as follows two days later —

"There is, I admit, the obligation of the Treaty. It is not necessary, nor would time permit me, to enter into the complicated question of the nature of the obligations of that Treaty ; but I am not able to subscribe to the doctrine of those who have held in this House what plainly amounts to an assertion, that the simple fact of the existence of a guarantee is binding on every party to it, irrespectively altogether of the particular position in which it may find itself at the time when the occasion for acting on the guarantee arises. The great authorities upon foreign policy to whom I have been accustomed to listen, such as Lord Aberdeen and Lord Palmerston, never to my knowledge took that rigid and, if I may venture to say so, that impracticable view of the guarantee. The circumstance that there is already an existing guarantee in force is of necessity an important fact, and a weighty element in the case to which we are bound to give full and ample consideration. There is also this further consideration, the force of which we must all feel most deeply, and that is, the common interests against the unmeasured aggrandisement of any Power whatever."

The Treaty is an old Treaty—1839—and that was the view taken of it in 1870. It is one of those Treaties which are founded, not only on consideration for Belgium, which benefits under the Treaty, but in the interests of those who guarantee the neutrality of Belgium. The honour and interests are, at least, as strong to-day as in 1870, and we cannot take a more narrow view or a less serious view of our obligations, and of the importance of those obligations than was taken by Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1870.

I will read to the House what took place last week on this subject. When mobilisation was beginning, I knew that this question must be a most important element in our policy—a most important subject for the House of Commons. I telegraphed at the same

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time in similar terms to both Paris and Berlin to say that it was essential for us to know whether the French and German Governments respectively were prepared to undertake an engagement to respect the neutrality of Belgium. These are the replies. I got from the French Government this reply :—

“The French Government are resolved to respect the neutrality of Belgium, and it would only be in the event of some other Power violating that neutrality that France might find herself under the necessity, in order to assure the defence of her security, to act otherwise. This assurance has been given several times. The President of the Republic spoke of it to the King of the Belgians, and the French Minister at Brussels has spontaneously renewed the assurance to the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs to-day.”

From the German Government the reply was :—

“The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs could not possibly give an answer before consulting the Emperor and the Imperial Chancellor.”

Sir Edward Goschen, to whom I had said it was important to have an answer soon, said he hoped the answer would not be too long delayed. The German Minister for Foreign Affairs then gave Sir Edward Goschen to understand that he rather doubted whether they could answer at all, as any reply they might give could not fail, in the event of war, to have the undesirable effect of disclosing, to a certain extent, part of their plan of campaign. I telegraphed at the same time to Brussels to the Belgian Government, and I got the following reply from Sir Francis Villiers :—

“The Minister for Foreign Affairs thanks me for the communication, and replies that Belgium will, to the utmost of her power, maintain neutrality, and expects and desires other Powers to observe and uphold it. He begged me to add that the relations between Belgium and the neighbouring Powers were excellent, and there was no reason to suspect their intentions, but that the Belgian Government believe, in the case of violation, they were in a position to defend the neutrality of their country.”

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It now appears from the news I have received to-day—which has come quite recently, and I am not yet quite sure how far it has reached me in an accurate form—that an ultimatum has been given to Belgium by Germany, the object of which was to offer Belgium friendly relations with Germany on condition that she would facilitate the passage of German troops through Belgium. Well, Sir, until one has these things absolutely definitely, up to the last moment, I do not wish to say all that one would say if one were in a position to give the House full, complete, and absolute information upon the point. We were sounded in the course of last week as to whether, if a guarantee were given that, after the War, Belgian integrity would be preserved, that would content us. We replied that we could not bargain away whatever interests or obligations we had in Belgian neutrality.

Shortly before I reached the House I was informed that the following telegram had been received from the King of the Belgians by our King—King George :—

“Remembering the numerous proofs of your Majesty’s friendship and that of your predecessors, and the friendly attitude of England in 1870, and the proof of friendship she has just given us again, I make a supreme appeal to the Diplomatic intervention of your Majesty’s Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium.”

Diplomatic intervention took place last week on our part. What can diplomatic intervention do now? We have great and vital interests in the independence—and integrity is the least part—of Belgium. If Belgium is compelled to submit to allow her neutrality to be violated, of course the situation is clear. Even if by agreement she admitted the violation of her neutrality, it is clear she could only do so under duress. The smaller States in that region of Europe ask but one thing. Their one desire is that they should be left

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alone and independent. The one thing they fear is, I think, not so much that their integrity but that their independence should be interfered with. If in this War which is before Europe the neutrality of one of those countries is violated, if the troops of one of the combatants violate its neutrality and no action be taken to resent it, at the end of the War, whatever the integrity may be, the independence will be gone.

I have one further quotation from Mr. Gladstone as to what he thought about the independence of Belgium. It will be found in "Hansard," Volume 203, Page 1787. I have not had time to read the whole speech and verify the context, but the thing seems to me so clear that no context could make any difference to the meaning of it. Mr. Gladstone said :—

"We have an interest in the independence of Belgium which is wider than that which we may have in the literal operation of the guarantee. It is found in the answer to the question whether, under the circumstances of the case, this country, endowed as it is with influence and power, would quietly stand by and witness the perpetration of the direst crime that ever stained the pages of history, and thus become participators in the sin."

No, Sir, if it be the case that there has been anything in the nature of an ultimatum to Belgium, asking her to compromise or violate her neutrality, whatever may have been offered to her in return, her independence is gone if that holds. If her independence goes, the independence of Holland will follow. I ask the House, from the point of view of British interests, to consider what may be at stake. If France is beaten in a struggle of life and death, beaten to her knees, loses her position as a great Power, becomes subordinate to the will and power of one greater than herself—consequences which I do not anticipate, because I am sure that France has the power to defend herself with all the energy and ability and patriotism which she has shown so often—

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still, if that were to happen, and if Belgium fell under the same dominating influence, and then Holland, and then Denmark, then would not Mr. Gladstone's words come true, that just opposite to us there would be a common interest against the unmeasured aggrandisement of any Power.

It may be said, I suppose, that we might stand aside, husband our strength, and that whatever happened in the course of this War at the end of it intervene with effect to put things right, and to adjust them to our own point of view. If, in a crisis like this, we ran away from those obligations of honour and interest as regards the Belgian Treaty, I doubt whether, whatever material force we might have at the end, it would be of very much value in face of the respect that we should have lost. And I do not believe, whether a great Power stands outside this War or not, it is going to be in a position at the end of it to exert its superior strength. For us, with a powerful Fleet, which we believe able to protect our commerce, to protect our shores, and to protect our interests, if we are engaged in war, we shall suffer but little more than we shall suffer even if we stand aside.

We are going to suffer, I am afraid, terribly in this War whether we are in it or whether we stand aside. Foreign trade is going to stop, not because the trade routes are closed, but because there is no trade at the other end. Continental nations engaged in war—all their populations, all their energies, all their wealth, engaged in a desperate struggle—they cannot carry on the trade with us that they are carrying on in times of peace, whether we are parties to the war or whether we are not. I do not believe for a moment, that at the end of this War, even if we stood aside and remained aside, we should be in a position, a material position, to use our force decisively to undo what had happened

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in the course of the War, to prevent the whole of the West of Europe opposite to us—if that had been the result of the War—falling under the domination of a single Power, and I am quite sure that our moral position would be such as to have lost us all respect. I can only say that I have put the question of Belgium somewhat hypothetically, because I am not yet sure of all the facts, but, if the facts turn out to be as they have reached us at present, it is quite clear that there is an obligation on this country to do its utmost to prevent the consequences to which those facts will lead if they are undisputed.

I have read to the House the only engagements that we have yet taken definitely with regard to the use of force. I think it is due to the House to say that we have taken no engagement yet with regard to sending an Expeditionary armed force out of the country. Mobilisation of the Fleet has taken place; mobilisation of the Army is taking place; but we have as yet taken no engagement, because I do feel that in the case of a European conflagration such as this, unprecedented, with our enormous responsibilities in India and other parts of the Empire, or in countries in British occupation, with all the unknown factors, we must take very carefully into consideration the use which we make of sending an Expeditionary Force out of the country until we know how we stand. One thing I would say. The one bright spot in the whole of this terrible situation is Ireland. The general feeling throughout Ireland—and I would like this to be clearly understood abroad—does not make the Irish question a consideration which we feel we have now to take into account. I have told the House how far we have at present gone in commitments and the conditions which influence our policy, and I have put to the House and dwelt at length upon how vital is the condition of the neutrality of Belgium.

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What other policy is there before the House? There is but one way in which the Government could make certain at the present moment of keeping outside this War, and that would be that it should immediately issue a proclamation of unconditional neutrality. We cannot do that. We have made the commitment to France that I have read to the House which prevents us from doing that. We have got the consideration of Belgium, which prevents us also from any unconditional neutrality, and, without those conditions absolutely satisfied and satisfactory, we are bound not to shrink from proceeding to the use of all the forces in our power. If we did take that line by saying, "We will have nothing whatever to do with this matter" under no conditions—the Belgian Treaty obligations, the possible position in the Mediterranean, with damage to British interests, and what may happen to France from our failure to support France—if we were to say that all those things mattered nothing, were as nothing, and to say we would stand aside, we should, I believe, sacrifice our respect and good name and reputation before the world and should not escape the most serious and grave economic consequences.

My object has been to explain the view of the Government, and to place before the House the issue and the choice. I do not for a moment conceal, after what I have said, and after the information, incomplete as it is, that I have given to the House with regard to Belgium, that we must be prepared, and we are prepared, for the consequences of having to use all the strength we have at any moment—we know not how soon—to defend ourselves and to take our part. We know, if the facts all be as I have stated them, though I have announced no intended aggressive action on our part, no final decision to resort to force at a moment's notice, until we know the whole of the case, that the use of it may be

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forced upon us. As far as the forces of the Crown are concerned, we are ready. I believe the Prime Minister and my right hon. Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty have no doubt whatever that the readiness and the efficiency of those Forces were never at a higher mark than they are to-day, and never was there a time when confidence was more justified in the power of the Navy to protect our commerce and to protect our shores. The thought is with us always of the suffering and misery entailed from which no country in Europe will escape and from which no abdication or neutrality will save us. The amount of harm that can be done by an enemy's ships to our trade is infinitesimal, compared with the amount of harm that must be done by the economic condition that is caused on the Continent.

The most awful responsibility is resting upon the Government in deciding what to advise the House of Commons to do. We have disclosed our mind to the House of Commons. We have disclosed the issue, the information which we have and made clear to the House, I trust, that we are prepared to face that situation, and that should it develop, as probably it may develop, we will face it. We worked for peace up to the last moment, and beyond the last moment. How hard, how persistently, and how earnestly we strove for peace last week, the House will see from the Papers that will be before it.

But that is over, as far as the peace of Europe is concerned. We are now face to face with a situation and all the consequences which it may yet have to unfold. We believe we shall have the support of the House at large in proceeding to whatever the consequences may be and whatever measures may be forced upon us by the development of facts or action taken by others. I believe the country, so quickly has the situation been forced upon it, has not had time to realise

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the issue. It perhaps is still thinking of the quarrel between Austria and Serbia, and not the complications of this matter which have grown out of the quarrel between Austria and Serbia. Russia and Germany we know are at war. We do not yet know officially that Austria, the ally whom Germany is to support, is yet at war with Russia. We know that a good deal has been happening on the French frontier. We do not know that the German Ambassador has left Paris.

The situation has developed so rapidly that technically, as regards the condition of the War, it is most difficult to describe what has actually happened. I wanted to bring out the underlying issues which would affect our own conduct, and our own policy, and to put them clearly. I have put the vital facts before the House, and if, as seems not improbable, we are forced, and rapidly forced, to take our stand upon those issues, then I believe, when the country realises what is at stake, what the real issues are, the magnitude of the impending dangers in the West of Europe, which I have endeavoured to describe to the House, we shall be supported throughout, not only by the House of Commons, but by the determination, the resolution, the courage, and the endurance of the whole country.

Rt. Hon. SIR EDWARD GREY

(Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)

Statement in Reply to German Chancellor, January 27, 1915

IT is not surprising that the German Chancellor should show anxiety to explain away his now historic phrase about a Treaty being a mere "scrap of paper." The phrase has made a deep impression, because the progress of the world largely depends upon the sanctity of agreements between individuals and between nations, and the policy disclosed in Herr von Bethmann Hollweg's phrase tends to debase the legal and moral currency of civilisation.

What the German Chancellor said was that Great Britain, in requiring Germany to respect the neutrality of Belgium, "was going to make war just for a word, just for a scrap of paper"; that is, that Great Britain was making a mountain out of a molehill. He now asks the American public to believe that he meant the exact opposite of what he said: that it was Great Britain who really regarded the neutrality of Belgium as a mere trifle, and Germany who "took her responsibilities towards neutral States seriously." The arguments by which Herr von Bethmann Hollweg seeks to establish the two sides of this case are in flat contradiction of plain facts.

First, the German Chancellor alleges that "England in 1911 was determined to throw troops into Belgium without the assent of the Belgian Government." This

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allegation is absolutely false. It is based upon certain documents found in Brussels which record conversations between British and Belgian officers in 1906 and again in 1911. The fact that there is no note of these conversations at the British War Office or Foreign Office shows that they were of a purely informal character, and no military agreement of any sort was at either time made between the two Governments.

Before any conversations took place between British and Belgian officers it was expressly laid down on the British side that the discussion of military possibilities was to be addressed to the manner in which, in case of need, British assistance could be most effectually afforded to Belgium *for the defence of her neutrality*; and on the Belgian side, a marginal note upon the record explains that "the entry of the English into Belgium would only take place *after the violation of our neutrality by Germany*."

As regards the conversation of 1911, the Belgian officer said to the British:—"You could only land in our country with our consent," and in 1913 Sir Edward Grey gave the Belgian Government a categorical assurance that no British Government would violate the neutrality of Belgium; and that "so long as it was not violated by any other Power we should certainly not send troops ourselves into their territory."

The Chancellor's method of misusing documents may be illustrated in this connection. He represents Sir Edward Grey as saying "he did not believe England would take such a step, because he did not think English public opinion would justify such action." What Sir Edward Grey actually wrote was:—"I said that I was sure that this Government would not be the first to violate the neutrality of Belgium, and I did not believe that any British Government would be the first to do so, nor would public opinion here ever approve of it."

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If the German Chancellor wishes to know why there were conversations on military subjects between British and Belgian officers, he may find one reason in a fact well known to him—namely, that Germany was establishing an elaborate network of strategical railways, leading from the Rhine to the Belgian frontier, through a barren, thinly-populated tract—railways deliberately constructed to permit of a sudden attack upon Belgium, such as was carried out in August last. This fact alone was enough to justify any communications between Belgium and other Powers on the footing that there would be no violation of Belgian neutrality unless it were previously violated by another Power. On no other footing did Belgium ever have any such communications.

In spite of these facts the German Chancellor speaks of Belgium having thereby “abandoned” and “forfeited” her neutrality, and he implies that he would not have spoken of the German invasion as a “wrong” had he then known of the conversations of 1906 and 1911. It would seem to follow that, according to Herr von Bethmann Hollweg’s code, a wrong becomes a right if the party which is to be the subject of the wrong foresees the possibility and makes preparations to resist it. Those who are content with older and more generally accepted standards are likely to agree rather with what Cardinal Mercier said in his Pastoral Letter :—“ Belgium was bound in honour to defend her own independence. She kept her oath. The other Powers were bound to respect and protect her neutrality. Germany violated her oath ; England kept hers. These are the facts.”

In support of the second part of the German Chancellor’s thesis, namely, that Germany “took her responsibilities towards neutral States seriously,” he alleges nothing except that “he spoke frankly of the wrong committed by Germany” in invading Belgium.

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That a man knows the right, while doing the wrong, is not usually accepted as proof of his serious conscientiousness.

The real nature of Germany's view of her "responsibilities towards neutral States" may, however, be learnt on authority which cannot be disputed, by reference to the English White Paper. If those responsibilities were, in truth, taken seriously, why, when Germany was asked to respect the neutrality of Belgium, if it were respected by France, did Germany refuse? France, when asked the corresponding question at the same time, agreed. This would have guaranteed Germany from all danger of attack through Belgium.

The reason of Germany's refusal was given by Herr von Bethmann Hollweg's colleague. It may be paraphrased in the well-known gloss upon Shakespeare:—"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just, but four times he that gets his blow in fust." "They had to advance into France," said Herr von Jagow, "by the quickest and easiest way, so as to be able to get well ahead with their operations and endeavour to strike some decisive blow as early as possible."

Germany's real attitude towards Belgium was thus frankly given by the German Foreign Secretary to the British Ambassador, and the German Chancellor, in his speech to the Reichstag, claimed the right to commit a wrong in virtue of the military necessity of "hacking a way through." The Treaty which forbade the wrong was by comparison a mere scrap of paper. The truth was spoken in these first statements by the two German Ministers. All the apologies and arguments which have since been forthcoming are afterthoughts to excuse and explain away a flagrant wrong. Moreover, all attacks upon Great Britain in regard to this matter, and all talk about "responsibilities towards neutral States," come badly from the man who on July 29 asked

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Great Britain to enter into a bargain to condone the violation of the neutrality of Belgium.

The German Chancellor spoke to the American correspondent of his "efforts for years to bring about an understanding between England and Germany," an understanding, he added, which would have "absolutely guaranteed the peace of Europe." He omitted to mention, what Mr. Asquith made public in his speech at Cardiff, that Germany required, as the price of an understanding, an unconditional pledge of England's neutrality. The British Government were ready to bind themselves not to be parties to any aggression against Germany; they were not prepared to pledge their neutrality in case of aggression by Germany. An Anglo-German understanding on the latter terms would not have meant an absolute guarantee for the peace of Europe; but it would have meant an absolutely free hand for Germany, so far as England was concerned, for Germany to break the peace of Europe.

The Chancellor says that in his conversation with the British Ambassador in August last he "may have been a bit excited at seeing the hopes and work of the whole period of his Chancellorship going for naught." Considering that at the date of the conversation (August 4) Germany had already made war on France, the natural conclusion is that the shipwreck of the Chancellor's hopes consisted, not in the fact of a European war, but in the fact that England had not agreed to stand out of it.

The sincerity of the German Chancellor's professions to the American correspondent may be brought to a very simple test, the application of which is the more apposite because it serves to recall one of the leading facts which produced the present war. Herr von Bethmann Hollweg refused the proposal, which England put forward and in which France, Italy, and Russia

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concurred, for a Conference at which the dispute would have been settled on fair and honourable terms without war. If he really wished to work with England for peace, why did he not accept that proposal? He must have known, after the Balkan Conference in London, that England could be trusted to play fair. Herr von Jagow had given testimony in the Reichstag to England's good faith in those negotiations.

The proposal for a second Conference between the Powers was made by Sir Edward Grey with the same straightforward desire for peace as in 1912 and 1913. The German Chancellor rejected this means of averting war. He who does not will the means must not complain if the conclusion is drawn that he did not will the end.

The second part of the interview with the American correspondent consists of a discourse upon the ethics of war. The things which Germany has done in Belgium and France have been placed on record before the world by those who have suffered from them and who know them at first hand. After this, it does not lie with the German Chancellor to read to other belligerents a lecture upon the conduct of war.

Rt. Hon. SIR EDWARD GREY

(Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)

At the Bechstein Hall, March 22, 1915

WHILE we are taken up by the particular methods by which the War is to be prosecuted to a successful conclusion, do not let us lose sight, even for a moment, of the character and origin of this War and of the main issue for which we are fighting.

Hundreds of millions of money have been spent, hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost, and millions have been wounded or maimed, in Europe during the last few months. All this might have been avoided by the simple method of a Conference or joint discussion between the European Powers concerned, which might have been held in London, or in The Hague, or wherever or in whatever form Germany would have consented to have it. It would have been far easier to have settled by a Conference the dispute between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, which Germany made the occasion for this War, than it was to get successfully through the Balkan crisis of two years ago. Germany knew, from her experience of the Conference in London which settled the Balkan crisis, that she could count upon our good will for peace in any Concert or Conference of the Powers. We had sought no diplomatic triumph in the Balkan Conference. We had not given ourselves to any intrigue. We had pursued impartially and honourably the end of peace. We were ready last July to do the same again. In recent years we had given Germany every assurance

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that no aggression upon her would receive any support from us. We had withheld from her but one thing: an unconditional promise to stand aside, however aggressive Germany herself might be to her neighbours. Last July France was ready to accept a Conference, Italy was ready to accept a Conference, Russia was ready to accept a Conference; and we know now that, after the British proposal for a Conference was made, the Emperor of Russia himself proposed to the German Emperor that the dispute should be referred to The Hague. Germany refused every suggestion made to her for settling the dispute in this way, and on her rests now, and must rest for all time, the appalling responsibility for having plunged Europe into this War, and for involving herself and the greater part of a whole continent in the consequences of it—the fourth time within living memory, prepared and planned.

As to our own part. We had assured Belgium that never would we violate her neutrality so long as it was respected by others. I had given this pledge to Belgium long before the War. On the eve of the War we asked France and Germany to give the same pledge. France at once did so, but Germany declined to give it. When, after that, Germany invaded Belgium, we were bound to oppose Germany with all our strength; and, if we had not done so at the first moment, is there anyone now who believes that, when Germany attacked the Belgians, shot combatants and non-combatants, and ravaged the country in a way that violated all rules of war of recent times, and all rules of humanity for all time—is there anyone who thinks it possible that we could have sat still and looked on without eternal disgrace?

Now, what are the issues for which we are fighting?

In due time, the terms of peace will be put forward by our Allies in common with us, in accordance with the

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Alliances that now exist between us and are public to the world. But one essential condition must be the restoration of Belgium to her independent national life and the free possession of her territory ; and reparation to her, as far as reparation is possible, for the cruel wrong done to her.

That is part of the great issue for which we with our Allies are contending and which is this :

We wish the nations of Europe to be free to live their independent lives, working out their own forms of government for themselves and their own national development, whether they be great States or small States, in full liberty. That is our ideal. The German ideal—we have had it poured out by German professors and publicists since the War began—is that of the Germans as a superior people ; to whom all things are lawful in the securing of their own power ; against whom resistance of every sort is unlawful and to be savagely put down ; a people establishing a domination over the nations of the Continent ; imposing a peace that is not to be a liberty for other nations, but subservience to Germany. I would rather perish or leave this Continent altogether than live in it under such conditions. After this War we and the other nations of Europe must be free to live, not menaced by talk of supreme War-Lords and shining armour and the sword continually rattled in the scabbard and Heaven continually invoked as an accomplice to German Arms, and not having our policy dictated and our national destinies and activities controlled by the military caste of Prussia. We claim for ourselves, and our Allies claim for themselves and together we will secure for Europe, the right of independent sovereignty for the different nations ; the right to pursue national existence, not in the shadow of Prussian hegemony or supremacy, but in the light of equal liberty.

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All honour for ever be given by us, whom age or circumstances have kept at home, to those who voluntarily have come forward to risk their lives, and give their lives, on the field of battle on land or sea. They have their reward in enduring fame and honour. And all honour be from us to the brave armies and navies of our Allies, who have exhibited such splendid courage and noble patriotism. The admiration they have aroused and the comradeship in arms will be an ennobling and endearing memory between us, cementing friendship and perpetuating national good will.

And for all of us who are serving the State at home in whatever capacity, whether officials, employers or wage-earners, doing our utmost to carry on the national life in this time of stress, there is the knowledge that there can be no nobler opportunity than that of serving one's country when its very existence is at stake, and when its cause is just and right; that never was there a time in our history when the crisis was so great and imperative as it is now, or the cause more just and right.

Rt. Hon. SIR EDWARD GREY

(Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)

In the House of Commons, Jan. 26, 1916

THE Right Hon. Gentleman who has just spoken (Mr. Leverton Harris) has made a most interesting speech, full of knowledge, and founded upon personal experience. The Right Hon. Gentleman is one of those, of whom there are several in the House and many outside, who have been giving most devoted service on committees in carrying out the policy of the Government with regard to contraband. There have been from the beginning of the War a number of people of great knowledge and experience who have given their services voluntarily on these various committees, and whose services have been of enormous value. I think the House will have gathered from the Right Hon. Gentleman's speech that the subject with which we are dealing is not really so simple, and cannot be made so simple, as might appear from some of the speeches that are made upon it and some of the articles which appear outside. It is a most difficult and complicated subject. I gather from the debate, as far as it has gone, that there is real misapprehension in the House as to what is the present state of things with regard to the amount of trade passing through neutral countries to the enemy, and also real misapprehension, and a vast underestimate, of what the Government is doing through its various agencies to prevent that trade. In the first place, I must deal

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with some of the figures scattered broadcast lately in some organs of the Press, which have created a grotesque and quite untrue impression of the amount of leakage through neutral countries—figures which will not bear examination, but the conclusions founded upon which have undoubtedly done great harm. The figures consist, as far as I have seen them, of statistics from the official returns of the United States giving the amount of exports to certain neutral countries in Europe in a normal year of peace. Figures are then given which purport to be the excess figure for those same neutral countries at the present time, these figures being greatly in excess of the peace figures. The peace figures are then subtracted from the figures of last year, and the conclusion is drawn that the whole of that surplus has gone to Germany. On that are founded various attacks upon the Government. These figures, published in this way, do a great injustice—or rather attacks founded upon these figures do a great injustice—to the Government. The figures take no account of the fact that in the case of many of these articles in time of peace neutral countries do not draw the whole of their supplies from the United States. They draw them from enemy countries, or from sources which are not available to them in time of war. Therefore, to take the exports from the United States into these countries, and to assume that, because these exports have risen therefore the large surplus which has been imported into neutral countries has gone into enemy countries, entirely leaves out of account the fact that in very many cases the increased exports from the United States have been for real consumption in those neutral countries, and have taken the place of the supplies which in peace time have been drawn from other sources than the United States, and are not now available.

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In the next place, the figures of exports from the United States give the amount of stuff which left the ports of the United States. These do not necessarily correspond with the amount of stuff which arrives in the neutral ports. What is the cause of all the trouble and the very great friction that there has been with the meat-packers of the United States? It is because a large amount of the produce coming from the United States consigned to neutral ports, which we believed was destined for the enemy, never reached the neutral ports. It is in the Prize Court here. So at one and the same time the Foreign Office, or the Government, is having a very warm contention indeed with neutral Governments, or groups of people in neutral countries, on the ground that we have put their produce into the Prize Court here and detained it, and at the same time we are being attacked in this country on the ground that that very same produce has gone through neutral countries into the enemy countries! Some figures have been published in the Press to-day giving a very different impression of the true state of the case as regards the neutral countries and the enemy—figures published by the War Trade Department. I recommend that those figures should be studied, for they, at any rate, reduce the thing to very different proportion.

But I have had some other figures supplied to me, out of which I am going to take two striking instances. The statement has been made in one organ of the Press, in regard to wheat, that the exports of wheat from the United States to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands collectively, rose from 19,000,000 bushels in the first ten months of 1913—that is, the year of peace—to 50,000,000 bushels in the corresponding period of 1915—that is to say, an excess of 31,000,000 bushels. The conclusion is drawn that that has all gone to the enemy through those neutral countries. It

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is almost incredible, if the figures supplied to me are reliable—and I believe they are—that a statement of that kind should have been made. Those 50,000,000 bushels from the United States are the figures given under a collective heading in the United States Returns, which comprises, not merely these four Scandinavian countries, but “other Europe,” including Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Malta ; so that these 50,000,000 bushels not only go to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, but also include the exports to Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Malta. The exports to Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Malta alone amounted to 23,000,000 bushels. That is a very large part of the whole increase. Why do these countries take so much ? Because no doubt they depended, I presume, in ordinary years, very largely on grain coming from Black Sea ports which has ceased to be available. Therefore there is no need to assume that Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Malta were importing wheat in order to pass on to the enemy ; they wanted it to supply the grain which they would have got in normal years from other sources.

From the figures that remain some millions more bushels must be deducted which have been allowed to go through under special international arrangements to the Belgian Relief Fund. When you have deducted those you find that these four countries—the three Scandinavian countries and Holland—which were supposed to have sent 31,000,000 bushels on to the enemy, had not, as a matter of fact, imported at all in excess of their normal requirements, and there is no reason to suppose that any of these bushels got to the enemy. Then I take the figures quoted in the Press for wheat-flour. The figures quoted suggest an increase in the exports of wheat-flour from the United States to Holland and the three Scandinavian countries in the first ten months of 1915, over the corresponding period of 1913,

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of 3,700,000 barrels; the assumption again being that that had all gone to the enemy. This increase includes not merely what went to those four countries, but also includes an increase to France of 1,400,000 barrels, and to Italy of 250,000 barrels. In addition, there was something over 1,000,000 allowed to go through to the Belgian Relief Fund, making, with the increase to France and to Italy, a total of 3,000,000 barrels. Out of, therefore, 3,700,000 barrels supposed to have gone to the enemy there are accounted for 3,000,000 barrels. The actual increase to the three Scandinavian countries is, therefore, reduced from 3,700,000 barrels to only 650,000 barrels. In view of the deficiency of the whole production of wheat in Scandinavia in 1914, this increase, according to the information supplied to me, cannot be regarded as excessive. That puts the thing in a very different light.

Leakage, of course, through neutral countries there has been, and will be. Whatever you do, if you adopt every suggestion made in this House, you cannot prevent some leakage. You cannot take over the administration of neutral countries. You cannot prevent smuggling taking place even against the regulations of the neutral countries themselves. It is not in our power to do that under whatever system you have, whether you call it blockade, or whatever name you give to it. You have still to let through to neutral countries the things which they really require for their own consumption. You have, therefore, to distinguish between the things which they need for their own consumption and the things which they import with a view to their being passed on to the enemy. You have to make that distinction. Nobody could have listened to the speech of my Right Hon. Friend the Member of East Worcestershire (Mr. Harris) without realising how impossible it is to do that perfectly. You have every sort of ingenuity brought to

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bear to make it difficult for you to distinguish—to make it absolutely impossible, whatever the Navy may do, whatever strict provision there may be, to make sure that in no case will a cargo, or part of a cargo which is apparently destined for consumption in a neutral country, but really is destined for the enemy, go through to that neutral country. Some leakage there will always be. We have been anxious about that leakage. We have done what we can to get real information as to what is going on. The other day Lord Faringdon, who a short time ago was well known in this House as Sir Alexander Henderson, went over to make inquiries on the spot. He is, at least, as well qualified by ability, knowledge and experience to ascertain the facts as anyone who could be sent on behalf of any unofficial agency. He has produced a report. That report does not say that there is no leakage, but I think, on the whole, it is a very satisfactory report. In my opinion it shows that the amount of leakage in the trade passing from overseas through these neutral countries to the enemy is, considering all the facts of the case, much less than might have been supposed. The general tendency of the report is to show that the maximum is being done which can be done without serious trouble with neutral countries founded upon the idea that you are really interfering with their supplies. You cannot make these inquiries and publish the information obtained without its being known to the enemy. If it is known to the enemy your power of getting further information, and of watching what is going on—the actual facts even of what is going on are useful to the enemy—will be diminished. I do not, however, see any objection to the report being shown in a way in which knowledge of it cannot get to the enemy. There is nothing in the report to conceal from people who are looking at the matter, and

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examining it from the point of view from which the House is examining it this afternoon. All that there is to be concealed is from the opposite point of view—that is, the enemy point of view.

I pass from those figures to another charge which is made, not, I understand, in the debate here, not in all the Press, but in some organs of the Press, and by some persons outside, in a most offensive form, which is grossly unfair and untrue. It is that the Navy is doing its utmost to prohibit goods reaching the enemy, and that the Foreign Office is spoiling the work of the Navy. When ships are brought in by the Navy to a port with goods destined for the enemy, the Foreign Office, it is alleged, orders those ships to be released, and undoes the work which the Navy is doing. I must give the House an account of what is exactly the machinery. I do not say that in the first three months of the War, before we had got our organisation complete, there was not a certain amount of confusion and overlapping, and that things were so well done as now. I will take the whole of last year up to the present date. What is the procedure? One of the ships under the Admiralty brings into port a neutral merchant vessel carrying a cargo which the naval officers think may be destined for the enemy. They have no adequate means of searching that cargo on the high seas; it has to be done in port. Until you have got that vessel in port you cannot really form an opinion of what is the probable destination of the cargo. The ship is brought into port by the Navy. If that ship turns out to have goods destined not merely for a neutral port, but for the *bona fide* consumption of a neutral country, without which that country would be starved of some supplies which it has every right to have, that cargo obviously ought to be released, and not put in the Prize Court at all. If, on the other hand, there is reason to suppose that

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that cargo is not destined for *bona fide* neutral use, then undoubtedly it ought to be put in the Prize Court. That is settled by the Contraband Committee.

The Contraband Committee is presided over at present by the Hon. and Learned Member for Leamington (Mr. Pollock), who, again, is one of those giving invaluable service to the State. Before he undertook the chairmanship it was presided over by my Right Hon. and Learned Friend who is now the Solicitor-General (Sir George Cave), who, of course, had to give up that position when he became Solicitor-General, because it was impossible to combine it with his official work. How is the Committee composed? Besides the Chairman, it is composed of one representative of the Foreign Office, one who represents the Board of Trade and Customs combined, and two representatives of the Admiralty, and that Committee, which has acquired very great experience in the course of its work, settles the question of whether the ship, or any part of the cargo in the ship, ought to be put in the Prize Court, or whether it ought to be released and go forward. I believe that Committee has done its work admirably, and that neither the country nor the Navy has any reason but to be exceedingly grateful for the knowledge and ability it has shown and the pains it has taken. Can the decision of that Committee be interfered with? Of course it can be interfered with. The Government can in any case say if such-and-such a ship, which the Committee thinks ought to be detained, ought for special reasons to be released. I have made what inquiry I can, and, in accordance with my own recollection, I think in the last year there have been three cases when ships have been dealt with or undertakings about ships have been given without consulting the Committee. Two of those ships were cases of ships which were released and sent back. Those two cases were discussed twice by the

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Cabinet, and those two particular ships were released for special reasons. The third case is that of a ship which was brought into port the other day—the *Stockholm*, a Swedish vessel. It is a ship to which the Swedish people attach great importance. It is, I believe, the first ship of a new line, a passenger vessel. The detention of it must cause great inconvenience, but it had on board a cargo which, I understand, the Contraband Committee had reason to suppose—I think rightly—was not all destined for use in Sweden, and might be sent on to the enemy. Anyhow, the detention of the vessel caused great inconvenience, and a special appeal was made from the Swedish Government in regard to that particular vessel, and with regard to one part of the cargo a special assurance was given. Of course these things have to be done rapidly if they are to be done at all. If you are to release a vessel, and wish to avoid inconvenience, you must release it quickly ; and, after consulting the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty, I sent a telegram to Stockholm saying that if we could receive assurances from the Swedish Government that the cargo, which seemed to us suspect, was destined for *bona fide* use in Sweden, and that none of it would go on to the enemy, or set free an equivalent amount of corresponding material to go on to the enemy, the ship, in order to avoid inconvenience, was to be released at once. That undertaking was given without consulting the Contraband Committee. I am sorry to say, as far as I am concerned, we have not received an assurance, and, therefore, no action has been taken. That is the sort of case in which, unless you are to forfeit entirely the good will of neutrals, unless you are to take what I consider an unduly high-handed and provocative action, you ought to say to a neutral country which makes a special case of inconvenience caused in regard to a ship, “ Give us assurances

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with regard to that cargo, and, rather than cause that inconvenience, we will be prepared to release the ship." That, I believe, represents the extent of interference with the Contraband Committee with regard to the release of ships in the last twelve months.

Now I would ask, really, is it not time after that that these reckless figures and these reckless statements should not be made with regard to the action of the Foreign Office or any Department of the Government? What, is it supposed, is the effect upon the Navy of making charges of that sort? If the charges made were true, and I was a naval officer, I should want to shoot the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. But that is not the thing that matters. The thing that matters is the dispiriting effect it has on our seamen. There never was a time in the whole history of this country when we—and when I say "we," I mean our Allies, too—have owed a greater tribute of gratitude and admiration to the Navy than for the work done during this War. To those of us who have to bear the brunt of much work, and face much difficulty, the knowledge of the efficiency, the courage, the spirit and the patriotism which animate the whole Navy is an upholding and a supporting thought, and there ought not to be statements of that kind, entirely unfounded as they are, put about, leading the Navy to suppose that the work which they are doing for the country, or any part of their work, is being undone by the Government, or any Department of the Government.

The task of the Foreign Office in this matter is a much more complicated one and much more burdensome than people know. The Foreign Office is not burdened as a Department with deciding about the release of particular ships. That, as I have shown, if it is not done by the Contraband Committee, is done by the Cabinet, or, in a very special case, by Ministers; but it is not

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done departmentally now. What is the work the Foreign Office has to do? The Foreign Office has to do its best to retain the good will of the neutrals. Now, supposing you know at the Foreign Office that the War Office, the Admiralty, the Ministry of Munitions, and perhaps one or more of our Allies are specially anxious that you should maintain open communication with some particular neutral country for strategical reasons, or for the sake of supplies which you get from them. We are constantly being told that certain supplies which come from abroad are absolutely essential for the Ministry of Munitions. The Board of Trade know that certain other supplies from abroad are absolutely necessary to carry on the industries of this country. The business of the Foreign Office is to keep the diplomatic relations such that there is no fear of these supplies being interfered with, and we have got at the same time to defend, to explain, and to justify to neutral countries all the interference that has taken place with trade destined for the enemy, which cannot be done without some direct or indirect interference also with neutral countries. That is not an easy matter. It is one in which the Foreign Office is constantly engaged, and I think the House must recognise, when Members are pressing, as they are quite right in pressing, this question of supplies to the enemy, and saying, quite rightly, that the interests of this country come first, that you must also be very careful that you do not unduly or wrongfully interfere with the rights of neutrals to get supplies which are necessary for their own consumption. You have no right to make neutrals suffer. I would like to consider—and it is rather germane to the case—what more can be done than is being done consistently with the rights of neutrals and also with effect? The Hon. Member who moved this Motion sketched out what he thought ought to be done, and I think the

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Hon. Member who seconded the Motion agreed with him. The suggestion was that there should be three lines of blockade, one extending to the coast of Norway, one across the Channel, and one across the Straits of Gibraltar. If you establish those lines of blockade you must do it consistently with the rights of neutrals. You cannot establish those lines of blockade and say that no ships shall go through them at all, or you will stop all traffic of every kind to the neutral ports inside. You would stop all traffic to Christiania, Stockholm, Rotterdam, Copenhagen—all traffic whatever. Well, of course, that is not consistent with the rights of neutrals. You cannot shut off all supplies to neutral countries. You must not try to make the grass grow in the streets of neutral ports. You must let through those lines vessels *bona fide* destined for the neutral ports with *bona fide* cargoes. Nor can you put every cargo in your Prize Court, and say it is not to go on to a neutral port until the Prize Court has examined it. The congestion in this country would be such that you could not deal with it if you did that, and you have no right to say that the British Prize Court is to be the neck of the bottle through which all trade has to pass. If we had gone, or attempted to go, as far as that, I think the War possibly might have been over by now, but it would have been over because the whole world would have risen against us, and we, and our Allies too, would have collapsed under the general resentment of the whole world. If you establish those lines, then the ship to neutral ports with a *bona fide* neutral cargo must be allowed to go through. Therefore what I understand is meant when you say blockade is that you are going to discriminate, and not stop everything that is going through your lines, but only stop what is destined to the enemy and let go through what is for neutrals. That is what is being done at the present time, and that is

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actually the action of the Admiralty to-day. The ships when brought in are dealt with by the method which I have described, and no ships are going through to German ports at all. Therefore that is actually being done. We are, as I think one Hon. Member said, filtering the trade which passes through with the object of stopping all the enemy trade. We are stopping the trade coming out, and we are also stopping the imports ; more than that you cannot do. You cannot do more than stop all imports into the enemy country and all exports coming out.

We are applying the doctrine of continuous voyage, and it is being applied now. On what other ground are goods to neutral ports held up but on the ground of continuous voyage ? Do not let it be supposed by adopting the actual proposal made this afternoon we are going to prevent goods reaching Germany more effectively than at the present time, except in one respect. If you had established the old technical blockade you would no doubt have been entitled to confiscate more largely ships and goods than at the present time. While you stop now and detain them and do not let the goods go through, you do not confiscate as largely as you would if you had had the old technical blockade. One of the reasons why this change is recommended is that it is going to be more palatable to the neutrals, but you are not going to make it more palatable by making the penalties more severe. What we want to do is to prevent goods reaching or coming from the enemy country, and that is what we are doing. We want to do it, and we believe that under the Order in Council it is being done. Do not let it be supposed that the Order in Council does something special either to validate or invalidate. The Mover of this Motion spoke as if an Order in Council was one thing and a blockade was another. What would have happened if

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we had adopted his plan would be that we should simply substitute one Order in Council for the present one. The blockade would be established by the Order in Council. An Order in Council does not make a thing good or bad. It is merely our way under our form of Constitution of announcing to the world what we are doing.

MR. S. BENN : Will the Right Hon. Gentleman deal with the point that the Allied nations should declare the blockade, rather than England by an Order in Council ?

SIR E. GREY : That is a very pertinent question, but it again shows a misapprehension. If we all declared a blockade the French Government would declare a blockade in their own way, according to their Constitution, and we should declare it in our way. What is happening at the present moment, to carry out the policy of last March, is that certain instructions are issued to the British Navy. The French Government issued precisely the same instructions to their Navy, and so, if we and the Allied nations declared a blockade they would issue their own Proclamation of a blockade, and we should issue ours. That is the way it would be done, precisely the same as now. The French have issued exactly the same Proclamation on their behalf as we have in regard to our Proclamation of March. The only thing is that you have under the British Constitution to call it an Order in Council, although other people may call it whatever they please. You would not have any change in that respect. I quite agree that you want common action with your Allies, and that is precisely what we have been having ever since last March with the French Government. If any one wishes to realise the justification for our present policy they have only got to read the correspondence which has been published with the United States already. If they wish to read the objections taken to it,

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and the objections which any sort of policy might lead to, they can read the Notes from the United States Government to this country, especially the last Note which has been published, and which has not yet been answered.

We are going to answer the last Note of the United States Government, but we are considering the whole question, and we are going to do it in consultation, in the first instance, with the French Government, who are concerned in this matter. That consultation is taking place at the present time with a view to pursuing not merely the same policy, but justifying it with the same arguments, and putting the same case before the world. We may also consider it, perhaps with some of the other Allies, who may have to be actively concerned in carrying out the policy. At present we are in consultation with the French Government on the subject. I can only say, with regard to neutrals, that we are perfectly ready to examine any method of carrying out the policy of last March, that is, what we believe is the belligerent right of stopping enemy trade, either to or from enemy ports. We are ready to examine any other method of carrying that out, than the one we are now adopting, which we are convinced will be effective, and which in form is likely to be more agreeable to neutrals, or in practice less inconvenient to them, so long as it will be effective. But do not let us hastily adopt changes of form unless we are quite sure that they are not going to impair the effectiveness of what we are doing, and that they are not going to involve us in legal difficulties more complicated than those which at present exist.

I must say to the House that at the present moment one of the greatest concerns of the Government is to explain and justify to neutrals what we are doing to avoid friction with them, and to get such agreements

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not with their Governments, but with the various people interested in trade, as will make it easy to distinguish between goods destined for the neutrals, and goods intended for the enemy. I said just now that we have not any right to make neutrals suffer. By that I mean that you have no right to deprive neutrals of goods which are genuinely intended for their own use. Inconvenience it is impossible to avoid, and you cannot help it. What I would say to neutrals is this:—We cannot give up this right to interfere with enemy trade; that we must maintain, and that we must press. We know, and it has always been admitted, that you cannot exercise that right without in some cases considerable inconvenience to neutrals—delay to their trade, and in some cases mistakes which it is impossible to avoid. What I would say to neutrals is this: There is one main question to be answered by them. Do they admit our right to apply the principles which were applied by the American Government in the war between North and South? Do they admit our right to apply those principles to modern conditions and to do our best to prevent trade with the enemy through neutral countries? If they say, “Yes,” as they are bound in fairness to say, then I would say to them, “Do let chambers of commerce, or whatever it may be in neutral countries, do their best to make it easy for us to distinguish.” Take the case of the *Stockholm*, the Swedish ship, the other day. When it was pointed out what great inconvenience we were causing by detaining that ship it was also suggested that in order to avoid detention in future there should be some understanding or some means of making it sure to us that the cargo was *bona fide* a Swedish cargo and not going to the enemy. That is the sort of thing we welcome.

What we ask of them, as we cannot avoid causing inconvenience and in some cases loss, is that they will

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help us to distinguish by making the distinction of *bona fide* trade, and thereby minimise the inconvenience. If, on the other hand, the answer is that we are not entitled to do that, or to attempt to prevent trade through the neutral countries to the enemy, then I must say definitely that if neutral countries were to take that line it is a departure from neutrality. I do not understand that they do take that line. It is quite true that there are things in the last Note from the United States Government which, if we were to concede them, would make it in practice absolutely impossible to prevent goods, even contraband, going wholesale through neutral countries to the enemy. If you were to concede all that was asked in the last Note of the United States you might just as well give up trying to prevent goods, even contraband goods, going through neutral countries to the enemy, but I do not understand that that is the intention or attitude of the United States Government or of any other Government. After all, I would say this: If there was a war in which a belligerent was entitled to use to the utmost every power, or every fair development of a power which has been exercised by any belligerent in previous wars, and recognised by international law, that applies to our Allies and ourselves in this War. As to the complaints about our interference with trade, what has Germany done? She has declared arbitrarily a part of the high seas a war zone, and in that zone she has continually sunk merchant vessels without notice or warning, with no precautions for the safety of the crews, sowing it with mines which sink merchant vessels, neutrals as well as belligerents. The sinking of merchant vessels is not confined to belligerents. A neutral vessel is sunk again and again by German submarines without warning, without inquiry as to the nature of its cargo, and without regard even to its destination, because they have

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been sunk proceeding from one neutral port to another neutral port and not coming to this country at all. In view of the criticism made to-day upon the action of the British Government and its Allies in interfering with trade, I would ask what would have been said by neutrals if we had done that? What would have been said if, instead of bringing cargoes into our Prize Court, bringing in the ship with the crew perfectly safe, the ship undamaged, the cargo untouched, examining it, and in some cases letting it go forward when satisfied that it is not destined for the enemy, and even in the worst case putting it into our Prize Court, so that if it turns out that we have made a mistake there can be a claim for compensation and the whole of the evidence can be examined—if, instead of doing that, we had sunk neutral vessels without regard to the character of their cargoes and without regard to the safety of the lives of innocent and defenceless crews? [AN HON. MEMBER: "And passengers!"] Well, of course, in regard to passengers, as the House knows, there has been considerable controversy between the United States Government and the enemy Government. They have taken up the point with regard to passengers where their own interests are concerned, but, with regard to the rest—the sinking of even neutral merchant vessels in this way—so far as I know nothing like the kind of protest has been made by neutral Governments that has been made with regard to some part of our own procedure which we believe to be perfectly justifiable in law, and which is, beyond all doubt, perfectly humane.

I understand that Germany justifies her action of that description by saying that it is retaliation upon us for stopping her food supply, the great case of stopping food supplies which Germany made the starting-ground for her illegal and inhuman policy being the fact that we detained the *Wilhelmina* early last February with

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foodstuffs to Germany. Was that the first instance of interfering with food supplies destined for the civil population in this War? Before that Germany had sunk two neutral vessels with cargoes of foodstuffs coming to open ports for the civil population of this country. She had requisitioned the food supply of the civil population of Belgium, and I understand that to-day confiscation goes on in the occupied districts of Poland. It was not till a powerful international organisation came into force to relieve the starvation of Belgians, whose food had been requisitioned by Germany in their own country—not till then—that there was any protection for the food of the civil population in the districts occupied by Germany. What right has Germany to complain of measures taken to interfere with her food supplies when, from the beginning of this War, her armed cruisers, so long as they could keep the seas, sunk neutral merchant vessels with food for the civil population of this country, and in effect treated food where they found it as absolute contraband? That being so, what we say to neutrals is that we are entitled to claim the utmost rights to which we can fairly found a claim upon the recognised practice—the practice which we ourselves have recognised—of other belligerents in previous wars.

Let us also bear this in mind. I do not say that we are exercising these measures of blockade the least bit more for our Allies than for ourselves. If we had no Allies I have no doubt that we should have done precisely the same thing, and, as the House says, it is our duty to this country to do it as effectively as possible. But do not let us forget that it is our duty to our Allies as well. We are in this War with Allies, a War forced upon Europe after every effort had been made to find a settlement which could perfectly easily have been found either by conference, as we suggested, or by

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reference to The Hague Tribunal, as the Emperor of Russia suggested. Prussian militarism would not have any other settlement but war. We are now in this War with our Allies. I say nothing of what the actual conditions of peace will be, because those are things which we must discuss with our Allies and settle in common with them. But the great object to be attained—and, until it is attained, the War must proceed—is that there shall not again be this sort of militarism in Europe, which in time of peace causes the whole of the Continent discomfort by its continual menace, and then, when it thinks the moment has come that suits itself, plunges the Continent into war. The whole of our resources are engaged in the War. Our maximum effort, whether it be military, naval, or financial, is at the disposal of our Allies in carrying on this contest. With them we shall see it through to the end, and we shall slacken no effort. Part of that effort is and must remain—whether it be in the interests of ourselves or of our Allies—in the interests of the great cause, the great transcending cause which unites us all together, which makes us feel that national life will not be safe, that individual life will not be worth living, unless we can achieve successfully the object of this War—that in that common cause we shall continue to exert all our efforts to put the maximum pressure possible upon the enemy; and part of that pressure must be and continue to be doing the most we can to prevent supplies going to or from the enemy, using the Navy to its full power, and in common with our Allies sparing nothing, whether it be military, naval, or financial effort, which this country can afford to see the thing through with them to the end.

Rt. Hon. SIR EDWARD GREY

(Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)

Statement to Mr. Edward Price Bell,
Chicago Daily News, April 10, 1916

PRUSSIAN tyranny over Western Europe, including these islands, our people will not stand. The pledges given by Mr. Asquith as regards the restoration of Belgium and Serbia shall be kept. We have signed a pact to make peace only in concert with our Allies; this pact, I need not say, we shall honour, strictly, and to the end. What we and our Allies are fighting for is a free Europe. We want a Europe free, not only from the domination of one nationality by another, but from hectoring diplomacy and the peril of war, free from the constant rattling of the sword in the scabbard, from perpetual talk of shining armour and war lords. In fact, we feel we are fighting for equal rights; for law, justice, peace; for civilisation throughout the world, as against brute force which knows no restraint and no mercy.

What Prussia proposes, as we understand her, is Prussian supremacy. She proposes a Europe modelled and ruled by Prussians. She is to dispose of the liberties of her neighbours, and of us all. We say that life on these terms is intolerable. And this also is what France and Italy and Russia say. We are not only fighting Prussia's attempt to do, in this instance, to all Europe what she did to non-Prussian Germany, but fighting the German idea of the wholesomeness,

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almost the desirability, of ever-recurrent war. Prussia under Bismarck deliberately and admittedly made three wars. We want a settled peace in Europe and throughout the world, which will be a guarantee against aggressive war.

Germany's philosophy is that a settled peace spells disintegration, degeneracy, the sacrifice of the heroic qualities in human character. Such a philosophy, if it is to survive as a practical force, means eternal apprehension and unrest. It means ever-increasing armaments. It means arresting the development of mankind along the lines of culture and humanity.

We are fighting this idea. We do not believe in war as the preferable method of settling disputes between nations. When nations cannot see eye to eye, when they quarrel, when there is a threat of war, we believe the controversy should be settled by methods other than those of war. Such other methods are always successful when there is good will and no aggressive spirit.

We believe in negotiation. We have faith in international conferences. We proposed a conference before this War broke out. We urged Germany to agree to a conference. Germany declined to do so. Then I requested Germany to select some form of mediation, some method of peaceful settlement, of her own. She would not come forward with any such suggestion. Then the Emperor of Russia proposed to Germany to send the dispute to The Hague Tribunal. There was no response. Our proposal of a conference was rejected by Germany : Russia, France and Italy all accepted it. Our proposal that Germany should suggest some means of peaceful settlement met with no success, nor did the Czar's proposal of arbitration. No impartial judgment of any kind was to be permitted to enter. It was a

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case of Europe submitting to the Teutonic will, or going to war.

If the Conference in London in the Balkan crisis in 1912-13 had been worked to the disadvantage of Germany or her allies, the German reluctance for a conference in 1914 would have been intelligible, but no more convincing pledge of fair play and single-minded desire for fair settlement than the conduct of that Conference in London was ever given. And in 1914, after Serbia had accepted nine-tenths of Austria's demands, the settlement of outstanding questions would have been easy. Russia ordered no general mobilisation till Germany had refused a conference and till German preparations for war were far ahead of the Russians. Germany declared war on Russia when Austria was showing every disposition to come to terms; and Germany was in fact at war with Russia four or five days before Austria, though the quarrel at that time was one that primarily concerned Austria and not Germany.

These two methods of settling international disputes—the method of negotiation and the method of war—I ask you to consider in the light of this struggle. Do we not see the disaster of the war method conclusively shown? How much better would have been a conference, or The Hague, in 1914, than what has happened since! Industry and commerce dislocated; the burdens of life heavily increased; millions of men slain, maimed, blinded; international hatreds deepened and intensified; the very fabric of civilisation menaced—these from the war method. The conference we proposed, or The Hague proposed by the Czar, would have settled the quarrel in a little time—I think a conference would have settled it in a week—and all these calamities would have been averted. Moreover—a thing of vast importance—we should have gone a long way in

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laying the permanent foundations for international peace.

The injustice done by this War has got to be set right. The Allies can tolerate no peace that leaves the wrongs of this War unredressed. When persons come to me with pacific counsels, I think they should tell me what sort of peace they have in mind. They should let me know on which side they stand, for the opponents do not agree. If they think, for example, that Belgium was innocent of offence; that she has been unspeakably wronged; that she should be set up again by those who tore her down, then, it seems to me, they should say so. Peace counsels that are purely abstract and make no attempt to discriminate between the rights and the wrongs of this War are ineffective, if not irrelevant.

There was no coalition against Germany before the War. Germany knew there was no coalition against her. We had assured her, in the most formal and categorical way, that in no circumstances would we be a party to any aggression against her. She wanted us to pledge ourselves to unconditional neutrality—wanted us to declare that no matter what she did on the Continent we should not interfere. It is true that she always referred to a possible war forced on her. The trouble was that she gave us no test of a war forced on her. She remained free to claim that any war was forced on her. She now claims that this War was forced on her. I need hardly remind you that at the outset Italy, the third member of the Triple Alliance, definitely refused to accept this view. No one thought of attacking Germany; there was not a measure taken by any other power that was not purely defensive; the German preparations were for attack and were far ahead of others on the Continent.

Belgium *was* a bulwark—defensive of Germany, of

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France, and of European peace. This bulwark, until Germany decided to make war, was in no danger from any quarter. In April, 1913, we had given renewed assurance to Belgium to respect her neutrality. When war threatened, we asked France if she would adhere to her pledge to respect the neutrality of Belgium. She said "Yes." We asked Germany the same question, and she declined to answer. Immediately afterwards, in scorn of her signature, she assaulted and destroyed the bulwark. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg acknowledged the wrong, pleading that "necessity knows no law," and promised that as soon as Germany's military aims were realised she would restore Belgium. Now he says there can be no *status quo ante*, either in the East or in the West. In other words, Belgium's independence is gone, as Serbia's and Montenegro's are gone, unless the Allies can set them up again.

To all this we say to Germany, "Recognise the principle urged by lovers of freedom everywhere: give to the nationalities of Europe a real freedom, not the so-called freedom doled out to subject peoples by Prussian tyranny, and make reparation, as far as it can be made, for the wrong done."

Good relations and an end to quarrels with other Powers. That was the object of Britain's *rapprochements* in recent years. Going far back, we had working relations with the Triple Alliance. But we were habitually in friction with France or Russia. Again and again it brought us to the verge of war. So we decided to come to an arrangement with France, and then with Russia—not with any hostile intent towards Germany, or any other power, but wholly to pave the way to permanent peace. So, instead of preparing for war, as Germany asserts, without a vestige of truth to support the assertion, we were endeavouring to avoid war.

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And German statesmen knew we were endeavouring to avoid war and not to make it.

Nobody wants peace more than we want it. But we want a peace that does justice, and a peace that re-establishes respect for the public law of the world. Presumably Germany would like neutrals to think we are applying pressure to keep France, Russia and Italy in the War. We are not. France, Russia and Italy need no urging to keep them in the War. They know why they are in the War. They know they are in it to preserve everything that is precious to nationality. It is this knowledge which makes them determined and unconquerable. It is quite impossible for me to express to you our admiration of the achievements of our associates in this struggle. And as is the measure of our admiration, so also will be the measure of our contribution to the common cause.

There are two statements that come from German sources. One is that we are preventing the Allies from making peace—that goes to the address of neutrals. The other is that we are meditating a separate peace with Germany and intend to abandon our Allies—that goes to the address of one or other of the Allies. Each statement is absolutely untrue.

We never were smitten with any madness to destroy “a united and free Germany.” We want nothing of the sort, and Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg knows we want nothing of the sort. We should be glad to see the German people free, as we ourselves want to be free, and as we want the other nationalities of Europe and of the world to be free. It belongs to the rudiments of political science, it is abundantly taught by history, that you cannot enslave a people, and make a success of the job—that you cannot kill a people’s soul by foreign despotism and brutality. We aspire to embark upon no such course of folly and futility towards another

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nation. We believe that the German people—when once the dreams of world-empire, cherished by Pan-Germanism, are brought to nought—will insist upon the control of its government; and in this lies the hope of secure freedom and national independence in Europe. For a German democracy will not plot and plan wars, as Prussian militarism plotted wars, to take place at a chosen date in the future.

Unless mankind learns from this War to avoid war, the struggle will have been in vain. Furthermore, it seems to me that over humanity will loom the menace of destruction. The Germans have thrown the door wide open to every form of attack upon human life. The use of poisonous fumes, or something akin to them in war, was recommended to our naval or military authorities many years ago, and was rejected by them as too horrible for civilised peoples. The Germans have come with floating mines in the open seas, threatening belligerents and neutrals equally; they have come with the indiscriminating, murderous Zeppelin, which does military damage only by accident; they have come with the submarine, which destroys neutral and belligerent ships and crews in scorn alike of law and of mercy; they have come upon blameless nations with invasion and incendiarism and confiscation; they have come with poisonous gases and liquid fire. All their scientific genius has been dedicated to wiping out human life. They have forced these things into general use in war. If the world cannot organise against war, if war must go on, then nations can protect themselves henceforth only by using whatever destructive agencies they can invent, till the resources and inventions of science end by destroying the humanity that they were meant to serve. The Germans assert that their culture is so extraordinarily superior that it gives them a normal right to impose it upon the rest of the world by force.

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Will the outstanding contribution of Kultur disclosed in this War be such efficiency in slaughter as to lead to wholesale extermination ?

The Prussian authorities have apparently but one idea of peace, an iron peace imposed on other nations by German supremacy. They do not understand that free men and free nations will rather die than submit to that ambition, and that there can be no end to war till it is defeated and renounced.

Rt. Hon. VISCOUNT GREY
OF FALLODON *

(Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)

To the Representatives of the Foreign
Press in London, October 23, 1916

LET me say to you that, in a time of war such as this, we all value the presence amongst us of a body of men belonging to other countries, both Allied and neutral, who will faithfully represent what they find to be our feeling; who will send out to the world a faithful picture of this country in the great struggle through which it is passing, who will speak the truth, and who, if they can succeed not only in speaking the truth, which is comparatively easy, but in getting the truth believed through the world at large, will have rendered the greatest possible service we can ask of them.

The President said I was going to make an historic speech. I doubt whether any historic speech can be made while the War is still in progress. After the War, very likely, but while the War is in progress the real historic work is being done in the offices of the General Staffs of the Allied countries and on the battlefield, where our soldiers are fighting. Words can do but little. The work done by the General Staffs at headquarters, by the armies in the field and the navies on the sea—that is the real work which is making history. We have

* Sir Edward Grey was created a Viscount, July, 1916.

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had, since the autumn began, two or three notable speeches—first of all, a great speech by M. Briand in the French Chamber; then, next in time, an interview given by Mr. Lloyd George to a Press correspondent in this country; then a speech by Mr. Asquith in the House of Commons; and lately we have had a note struck just as firmly in Petrograd by an official *communiqué*, under the auspices of the Minister of the Interior. Those speeches have given to the world the note and the tone and the feeling of the Allies at this moment. I endorse all that they have said, but this afternoon for a few moments I would like to talk, not about the conditions of peace, which can only be stated and formulated by the Allies all together and not by any one of them separately, but about the general object which the Allies must secure in this War.

To do that I would ask you to recall that we must never forget how the War came about. If we are to approach the subject in a proper spirit it can only be by recalling, and never for one moment forgetting, what was the real cause of the War. Some people say "You need not go back on the old ground now; everybody knows it!" You cannot go back on it too often. It affects the conditions of peace.

Germany talks of peace. Her statesmen talk of peace to-day, but what sort of peace do they talk of? Oh, they say, Germany must have guarantees against being attacked again. If this War had been forced upon Germany that would be a logical statement. It is precisely because it was not forced upon Germany, but forced by Germany upon Europe, that it is the Allies who must have guarantees for future peace. In July, 1914, no one thought of attacking Germany. It is said that Russia was the first to mobilise. That, I understand, is what is represented in Germany as a justification for the statement that the War was not an

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aggressive war on Germany's part, but was forced upon her. Russia never made the mobilisation of which Germany complained until after Germany had refused a conference, and she never made it until after a report had appeared in Germany that Germany had ordered mobilisation and that report had been telegraphed to Petrograd. As a matter of fact it was the story of 1870 over again—preparation for war, not only the preparation of material, but the preparatory stages for war all advanced in Berlin to a point beyond that of any other country, and then, when the chosen moment came, a manœuvre made to provoke some other country to take a defensive step, and when that defensive step was taken, then to receive it with an ultimatum which made war inevitable.

The same thing with the invasion of Belgium. Strategic railways had been made in Germany, and the whole plan of campaign of the German staff was to attack through Belgium, and now it is represented that they had to attack through Belgium because other people had planned to attack through Belgium. I would like nothing better than to see those statements—that the Russian mobilisation was an aggressive and not a defensive measure, and that any other Power than Germany had trafficked in the neutrality of Belgium or planned to attack through Belgium—I would like to see those statements investigated before any independent and impartial tribunal.

German organisation is very successful in some things, but in nothing more successful than in preventing the truth from reaching their own people, and in presenting to them a point of view which is not that of the truth—the statement that the War was forced upon Germany. When England proposed the conference Russia, France, and Italy accepted the conference ; when four Powers offer a conference and one Power refuses

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it, is it the Powers who are offering the conference which are forcing war, or the Power which refuses it? The Emperor of Russia offered The Hague Tribunal. One Sovereign offers The Hague Tribunal and another ignores it. Is it the Sovereign who offers reference to The Hague who is forcing war, or the Sovereign who ignores the offer? On the very eve of war France gave her pledge to respect the neutrality of Belgium if Germany would not violate it. We asked for such a pledge. Was it the Power which asked for the pledge and the Power which gave the pledge which were responsible for the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, or the Power which refused to give the pledge? Belgium knows, and every Frenchman and Englishman knows, that never at any time was there a suggestion that French or English soldiers should enter Belgium unless it were to defend Belgium from a violation of her neutrality, which had first been undertaken by Germany.

Why was it that all the efforts to avoid the war in July, 1914, failed? Well, because you cannot have peace without good will, and because in Berlin there was the will to war and not the will to peace.

Now just lately, I think to an American, the Crown Prince has deplored the loss of life caused by this War. Yet it was because we knew what the suffering of war must be, because we knew how terrible a thing war, let loose in Europe, would be, that we tried to avoid it in 1914. Then was the time to have been penetrated with a sense of all that war would mean. After we have had this terrible experience, our Allies and ourselves are determined that the War shall not end till we can be sure, at any rate, that the generations which come after us and our nations in future are not to be subjected to such a terrible trial again.

What was the German plan? I saw some statement

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in the Press the other day that a German officer had recognised that Germany had failed this time, but that in ten years she was going to succeed. What was the plan; what was the failure? It was to be a short, successful War. There was a time-table—so long to get to Paris; so long to defeat France; so long afterwards to defeat Russia—and as to England, the plan was that England should be kept out of the War, but if England did enter the War it was not thought that the Expeditionary Force we had available would be enough to upset the enemy's plans. People who are militarists, whose ideas and thoughts run solely on military considerations, wholly material, forget to estimate and cannot estimate the spirit and the soul which exists in nations when they are attacked and are fighting for their lives. The plan was that France and Russia were to be defeated, England was to be isolated—and disgraced.

We must never forget, as we go through this War, that an offer was made to us to keep out of the War. We were asked by the German Government to engage to remain neutral on certain conditions. We were asked to condone the violation of the neutrality of Belgium—because that was what the offer came to—though the German Government were pledged by treaty to uphold it. And we were asked to give Germany a free hand to take whatever she liked of the French Colonies. That is why I say the plan was not only to isolate us, but to discredit us. I would ask any neutral to put it to himself—what would be the future of this country if the British Government had for a moment accepted such an offer? We might have had an Army and a Navy, but there would have been no moral, no spirit in the nation. We should have had the contempt of the whole world. Tactics so gross as that did not succeed, and I need not recall what the reply of the

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British Government was, nor what the spirit of the nation was at the opening of the War.

We should not think merely of what Germany says to-day : it is worth looking back to the expectations of her Government and people when the War started. Then we saw something of their real mind. There was a certain Professor Ostwald in Germany, who unburdened himself, I think to an American, in August, 1914. He called himself a pacifist, and this is what he described as German aims. Germany was to dictate peace to the rest of Europe, and the principle of the absolute sovereignty of individual nations must be given up.

Don't let us forget that that was the spirit in which Germany began this War. What is the spirit in which the War is being carried on by the Allies and ourselves to-day ? I take it from the words of the Prime Minister the other day :—" We shall fight until we have established supremacy of right over force, free development under equal conditions, and each in accordance with its own genius, of all States, great and small, which build up the family of civilised mankind."

Into this struggle we have put, rightly and necessarily, all our resources ; all our wealth ; all our material ; and all our labour ; and now, when we have had time to equip and train a large Army, we are putting into it all the best life's blood of the nation to shed it on the Continent, side by side with our Allies, in emulation of them, stimulated by the courage and self-sacrifice which they themselves are showing in defence of their own country. We are doing it because we know that their cause and ours is one ; that to the end and for the future we fall or stand together ; that the separation of one from the other is the destruction of the one separated, and not its safety, and that for all of us unity is essential, not merely to victory, but to our future life

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and success. Germany has been trying throughout the War to separate one from the other—now one, now another. Not a week passes that does not confirm our resolve to go through with our Allies to the end, and theirs to go through with each other. I trust that the memory of the suffering we have undergone together, the memory of the joint courage which is carrying us through all that we have been through side by side, will be a perpetual bond of alliance and sympathy between our Government and peoples.

Looking to the future after the War, what is it that neutrals can do? The other day a correspondent sounded me upon the subject of what neutrals can do. I wrote in reply: "I believe that the best work that neutrals can do for the moment is to work up an opinion for such an agreement between nations as will prevent a war like this from happening again. If nations had been united in such an agreement, and prompt and resolute to insist in July, 1914, that the dispute must be referred to a conference or to The Hague, and that the Belgian Treaty must be observed, there would have been no war." I would ask neutrals to observe this—that belligerent countries engaged in war, fighting as we are to-day in a struggle for life and death, fighting, it is true, for victory, with increasing prospects of seeing that victory approaching nearer, but still knowing that if we stop short of victory we stop short of everything—nations engaged in such a struggle cannot be expected to have much time to spend upon developing ideas of what can be done after victory is secured. But neutrals can do it, and it is interesting to observe the attitude, not only of President Wilson, but of Mr. Hughes, the Republican Candidate for the Presidency.

In the United States a league has already sprung up, supported by various distinguished people, with the object, not of interfering with belligerents in this War

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but of getting ready for some international association, after this War is over, which shall do its part in making peace secure in future. I would like to say that if we seem to have little time to give to such ideas ourselves while we are engaged in this struggle, such a work in neutral countries is one to which we should all look with favour and with hope. Only bear this in mind, if the nations in the world after the War are to do something more effective than they have been able to do before, to bind themselves together for the common object of peace, they must be prepared not to undertake more than they are prepared to uphold by force, and to see when the time of crisis comes that it is upheld by force. In other words, we say to neutrals who are occupying themselves with this question that we are in favour of it. But we shall have to ask when the time comes for them to make any demand on us for such a thing: "Will you play up when the time comes?" It is not merely a sign manual of Sovereigns or Presidents that is required to make a thing like that worth while; it must also have behind it Parliaments and national sentiment.

The object of this league is to insist upon treaties being kept and some other settlement being tried before resort to war. In July, 1914, there was no such league in existence. Supposing a generation hence such a condition of things as in July, 1914, recurs and there is such a league in existence, it may, and it ought to keep the peace. Everything will depend upon whether the national sentiment behind it is so penetrated by the lessons of this War as to feel that in the future each nation, although not immediately concerned in this dispute, is yet interested, and vitally interested, in doing something, even if it be by force, to keep the peace.

But there must be more than that. You must have

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some agreement after this War is over as to the methods under which war is to be conducted. Germany complains of our methods in this War. She complains of our blockade. From the very beginning Germany did her utmost to prevent food reaching this country. In the early stages of the War she sank two neutral ships with food for this country. It does not lie with her to complain of our blockade. But what about other methods which have been introduced—the sowing of mines indiscriminately upon the high seas, a danger equally to neutrals and to belligerents; the pouring of shells into defenceless coast towns? — because you must remember that what is required, according to the German official *communiqués*, to convert an Allied town on the coast into a fortress is not the position of guns in it or the presence of troops, but merely the fact that it has been fired upon by a German cruiser. Then there is the use of poisonous gas in war, which nobody would have believed possible if the Germans had not begun it, which nobody thought of using till the Germans began it. In the Gallipoli Peninsula neither we nor the French used gas, because we would not be the first to introduce it anywhere. That has been brought into the War. Then there is the sinking of merchant vessels, with the destruction of the passengers and crews; the acts committed in Belgium and other Allied territory in the occupation of Germany, some of which have been the subject of investigation and report, in breach of all the laws and conventions of war and all the most elementary dictates of humanity.

And one thing more, of which we hear little, very little, and do not know the full story. Since the outbreak of War, since Turkey entered the War, she has been the vassal of Germany. Enough has leaked through to make it clear that there has gone on, and is going on, in Turkey, on a scale unprecedented, and with horrors

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unequalled before, an attempt to exterminate the Christian population; horrors which Germany could have prevented, and which could only have gone on with her toleration. Perhaps some day some neutral nation who knows the full story will make it known to the world. All these things have been happening during this War, and what a prospect it opens for the future! Are all the resources of science to continue to be devoted after this War to invent means of destroying the human race, with no restriction upon their use? It is a prospect which threatens civilisation and the existence of the race itself.

Germany, in letting loose these things, has been the great anarchist who has let loose on the world a greater and more terrible anarchy than any individual anarchist ever dreamed of. In future, war, unless there is some means of restraining it, will by the development of science be made even more terrible and horrible than this War has been, because Germany has thrown down all the barriers which civilisation previously built up so as to keep the horrors of war within bounds. Neutral nations have an interest in seeing that something is done to ensure that there shall be rules which shall be kept in future wars—rules which shall be so laid down and supported that it will be clear that any nation which departs from them will be regarded by the whole world as the enemy of the human race, and have the whole world against it.

The indiscriminate use of high explosives to destroy great cities, to destroy combatants and non-combatants alike, all those things which have been done in this War, the introduction of poisonous gas, the introduction perhaps of disease—it will need all the efforts not only of belligerents but of neutrals, after this War is over, to see that the barriers necessary to secure that the inventions of science are used in the future, in the air,

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on the land, in the water and under the water, not for the destruction of mankind, but for its welfare, to see that all nations shall recognise some responsibility to prevent outbreaks of war, and that, if there be war, it shall be conducted by rules at least as humane as those which our ancestors observed, and which Germany to-day has disregarded and thrown to the winds. This is a matter in which the whole human race is interested.

Day by day it is brought home to us that here and in the countries of the Allies there are hundreds of thousands of homes to which, indeed, victory may bring a sense of pride and satisfaction, but to which it can never bring just the same gladness and joy in life that was in these homes before the War. Thousands of young men—one young life after another—go to the front, mount in spirit heights of nobleness and courage, to which in ordinary times even a long life gives no opportunity of attaining. And on those heights many of them pass away, leaving often some record of the spirit with which they have met their death, which makes us doubly proud of them, although it adds to the poignancy of grief and sense of sorrow and loss. They are succeeded by others, and yet by others, and will be as long as the effort is required—a long procession from all our countries of men who die but who do not fail, because their life and the manner of their death is a glorious success.

This generation in its prime is giving its life, but it is giving it that the older generation now among us may live out its years after this War in peace, freedom, and honour, and that the generation which is now children, and the generations which are yet to come, may enjoy life and develop the national life, free from the stifling oppression of the domination of Prussian militarism. For years before this War we were living under the deepening shadow of Prussian militarism,

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extending itself first over the whole of Germany and then extending itself over the whole Continent. There must be no end to this War, no peace except a peace which is going to ensure that the nations of Europe live in the future free from that shadow in the open air and in the light of freedom. For that we are contending. We know that if mankind has any birthright, as we believe it has a birthright, to peace and to liberty, then our cause is just and right, because it is for those we are fighting.

When they ask us: "How long is the struggle to be continued?" we can but reply that it must be continued till these things are secured, and if it be hard that the present generation in its prime should be called on to sacrifice all, it is for the sake of the future of the nation and the generations that come after. It is our determination, which the progress of the War but deepens, in common with our Allies, to continue the War until we have made it certain that the Allies in common shall have achieved the success which must and ought to be theirs, until they have secured the future peace of the whole Continent of Europe, until they have made it clear that all the sacrifices we have made shall not have been in vain.

Rt. Hon. D. LLOYD GEORGE

(Chancellor of the Exchequer)

At Queen's Hall, London, Sept. 19, 1914

I HAVE come here this afternoon to talk to my fellow-countrymen about this great War and the part that we ought to take in it. I feel my task is easier after we have been listening to the greatest war song in the world ("The March of the Men of Harlech").

There is no man in this room who has always regarded the prospect of engaging in a great war with greater reluctance, and with greater repugnance, than I have done throughout the whole of my political life. There is no man either inside or outside of this room more convinced that we could not have avoided it without national dishonour. I am fully alive to the fact that every nation who has ever engaged in any war has always invoked the sacred name of honour. Many a crime has been committed in its name; there are some being committed now. All the same, national honour is a reality, and any nation that disregards it is doomed. Why is our honour as a country involved in this War? Because, in the first instance, we are bound by honourable obligations to defend the independence, the liberty, the integrity, of a small neighbour that has always lived peaceably. She could not have compelled us; she was weak; but the man who declines to discharge his duty because his creditor is too poor to enforce it is a black-guard. We entered into a Treaty—a solemn Treaty—

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two treaties—to defend Belgium and her integrity. Our signatures are attached to the documents. Our signatures do not stand alone there; this country was not the only country that undertook to defend the integrity of Belgium. Russia, France, Austria, Prussia—they are all there. Why are Austria and Prussia not performing the obligations of their bond? It is suggested that when we quote this Treaty it is purely an excuse on our part—it is our low craft and cunning—to cloak our jealousy of a superior civilisation that we are attempting to destroy. Our answer is the action we took in 1870. What was that? Mr. Gladstone was then Prime Minister. Lord Granville, I think, was then Foreign Secretary. I have never heard it laid to their charge that they were ever Jingoës.

What did they do in 1870? That Treaty bound us then. We called upon the belligerent Powers to respect it. We called upon France, and we called upon Germany. At that time, bear in mind, the greatest danger to Belgium came from France and not from Germany. We intervened to protect Belgium against France, exactly as we are doing now to protect her against Germany. We proceeded in exactly the same way. We invited both the belligerent Powers to state that they had no intention of violating Belgian territory. What was the answer given by Bismarck? He said it was superfluous to ask Prussia such a question in view of the treaties in force. France gave a similar answer. We received at that time the thanks of the Belgian people for our intervention in a very remarkable document. It is a document addressed by the Municipality of Brussels to Queen Victoria after that intervention, and it reads:—

“The great and noble people over whose destinies you preside has just given a further proof of its benevolent sentiments towards our country. . . . The voice of the English nation has been heard above the din of arms, and

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it has asserted the principles of justice and right. Next to the unalterable attachment of the Belgian people to their independence, the strongest sentiment which fills their hearts is that of an imperishable gratitude."

That was in 1870. Mark what followed. Three or four days after that document of thanks a French army was wedged up against the Belgian frontier, every means of escape shut out by a ring of flame from Prussian cannon. There was one way of escape. What was that? Violating the neutrality of Belgium. What did they do? The French on that occasion preferred ruin and humiliation to the breaking of their bond, The French Emperor, the French Marshals, 100,000 gallant Frenchmen in arms, preferred to be carried captive to the strange land of their enemies, rather than dishonour the name of their country. It was the last French army in the field. Had they violated Belgian neutrality, the whole history of that war would have been changed, and yet, when it was the interest of France to break the Treaty, then she did not do it.

It is the interest of Prussia to-day to break the Treaty, and she has done it. She avows it with cynical contempt for every principle of justice. She says: "Treaties only bind you when it is your interest to keep them." "What is a Treaty?" says the German Chancellor; "A scrap of paper." Have you any £5 notes about you? I am not calling for them. Have you any of those neat little Treasury £1 notes? If you have, burn them; they are only scraps of paper. What are they made of? Rags. What are they worth? The whole credit of the British Empire. Scraps of paper! I have been dealing with scraps of paper within the last month. One suddenly found the commerce of the world coming to a standstill. The machine had stopped. Why? I will tell you. We discovered—many of us for the first time, for I do not pretend that

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I do not know much more about the machinery of commerce to-day than I did six weeks ago, and there are many others like me—we discovered that the machinery of commerce was moved by bills of exchange. I have seen some of them—wretched, crinkled, scrawled over, blotched, frowsy, and yet those wretched little scraps of paper move great ships laden with thousands of tons of precious cargo from one end of the world to the other. What is the motive power behind them? The honour of commercial men. Treaties are the currency of international statesmanship. Let us be fair: German merchants, German traders, have the reputation of being as upright and straightforward as any traders in the world—but if the currency of German commerce is to be debased to the level of that of her statesmanship, no trader from Shanghai to Valparaiso will ever look at a German signature again. This doctrine of the scrap of paper, this doctrine which is proclaimed by Bernhardt, that treaties only bind a nation as long as it is to its interest, goes under the root of all public law. It is the straight road to barbarism. It is as if you were to remove the Magnetic Pole because it was in the way of a German cruiser. The whole navigation of the seas would become dangerous, difficult, and impossible; and the whole machinery of civilisation will break down if this doctrine wins in this War. We are fighting against barbarism—and there is only one way of putting it right. If there are nations that say they will only respect treaties when it is to their interest to do so, we must make it to their interest to do so for the future.

What is their defence? Consider the interview which took place between our Ambassador and the great German officials. When their attention was called to this Treaty to which they were parties, they said: “We cannot help that. Rapidity of action is the great

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German asset." There is a greater asset for a nation than rapidity of action, and that is honest dealing. What are Germany's excuses? She says Belgium was plotting against her; Belgium was engaged in a great conspiracy with Britain and with France to attack her. Not merely is it not true, but Germany knows it is not true. What is her other excuse? That France meant to invade Germany through Belgium. That is absolutely untrue. France offered Belgium five army corps to defend her if she were attacked. Belgium said: "I do not require them; I have the word of the Kaiser. Shall Cæsar send a lie?" All these tales about conspiracy have been vamped up since. A great nation ought to be ashamed to behave like a fraudulent bankrupt, perjuring its way through its obligations. What she says is not true. She has deliberately broken this Treaty, and we were in honour bound to stand by it.

Belgium has been treated brutally. How brutally we shall not yet know. We already know too much. But what had she done? Had she sent an ultimatum to Germany? Had she challenged Germany? Was she preparing to make war on Germany? Had she inflicted any wrong upon Germany which the Kaiser was bound to redress? She was one of the most unoffending little countries in Europe. There she was—peaceable, industrious, thrifty, hard-working, giving offence to no one. And her cornfields have been trampled, her villages have been burnt, her art treasures have been destroyed, her men have been slaughtered—yea, and her women and children too. Hundreds and thousands of her people, their neat, comfortable little homes burnt to the dust, are wandering homeless in their own land. What was their crime? Their crime was that they trusted to the word of a Prussian King. I do not know what the Kaiser hopes to achieve by this War. I have a shrewd idea what he will get; but one thing he has

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made certain, and that is that no nation will ever commit that crime again.

I am not going to enter into details of outrages. Many of them are untrue, and always are in a war. War is a grim, ghastly business at best or at worst—and I am not going to say that all that has been said in the way of outrages must necessarily be true. I will go beyond that, and I will say that if you turn two millions of men—forced, conscript, compelled, driven—into the field, you will always get amongst them a certain number who will do things that the nation to which they belong would be ashamed of. I am not depending on these tales. It is enough for me to have the story which Germans themselves avow, admit, defend and proclaim—the burning and massacring, the shooting down of harmless people. Why? Because, according to the Germans, these people fired on German soldiers. What business had German soldiers there at all? Belgium was acting in pursuance of the most sacred right, the right to defend its homes. But they were not in uniform when they fired! If a burglar broke into the Kaiser's Palace at Potsdam, destroyed his furniture, killed his servants, ruined his art treasures—especially those he has made himself—and burned the precious manuscripts of his speeches, do you think he would wait until he got into uniform before he shot him down? They were dealing with those who had broken into their household. But the perfidy of the Germans has already failed. They entered Belgium to save time. The time has gone. They have not gained time, but they have lost their good name.

But Belgium is not the only little nation that has been attacked in this War, and I make no excuse for referring to the case of the other little nation, the case of Serbia. The history of Serbia is not unblotted. Whose history, in the category of nations, is unblotted? The first

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nation that is without sin, let her cast a stone at Serbia. She was a nation trained in a horrible school, but she won her freedom with a tenacious valour, and she has maintained it by the same courage. If any Serbians were mixed up in the assassination of the Grand Duke, they ought to be punished. Serbia admits that. The Serbian Government had nothing to do with it. Not even Austria claims that. The Serbian Prime Minister is one of the most capable and honoured men in Europe. Serbia was willing to punish any one of her subjects who had been proved to have any complicity in that assassination. What more could you expect? What were the Austrian demands? Serbia sympathised with her fellow-countrymen in Bosnia—that was one of her crimes. She must do so no more. Her newspapers were saying nasty things about Austria: they must do so no longer. That is the German spirit; you had it in Zabern. How dare you criticise a Prussian official? And if you laugh, it is a capital offence—the colonel in Zabern threatened to shoot if it was repeated. In the same way the Serbian newspapers must not criticise Austria. I wonder what would have happened if we had taken the same line about German newspapers. Serbia said: “Very well, we will give orders to the newspapers that they must in future criticise neither Austria, nor Hungary, nor anything that is theirs.” Who can doubt the valour of Serbia, when she undertook to tackle her newspaper editors? She promised not to sympathise with Bosnia; she promised to write no critical articles about Austria; she would have no public meetings in which anything unkind was said about Austria.

But that was not enough. She must dismiss from her army the officers whom Austria should subsequently name. Those officers had just emerged from a war where they had added lustre to the Serbian arms; they were gallant, brave and efficient. I wonder whether it

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was their guilt or their efficiency that prompted Austria's action ! But, mark you, the officers were not named ; Serbia was to undertake in advance to dismiss them from the army, the names to be sent in subsequently. Can you name a country in the world that would have stood that ? Supposing Austria or Germany had issued an ultimatum of that kind to this country, saying, "You must dismiss from your Army—and from your Navy—all those officers whom we shall subsequently name." Well, I think I could name them now. Lord Kitchener would go. Sir John French would be sent away ; General Smith-Dorrien would go, and I am sure that Sir John Jellicoe would have to go. And there is another gallant old warrior who would go—Lord Roberts. It was a difficult situation for a small country. Here was a demand made upon her by a great military Power that could have put half-a-dozen men in the field for every one of Serbia's men, and that Power was supported by the greatest military Power in the world. How did Serbia behave ? It is not what happens to you in life that matters ; it is the way in which you face it—and Serbia faced the situation with dignity. She said to Austria : "If any officers of mine have been guilty, and are proved to be guilty, I will dismiss them." Austria said : "That is not good enough for me." It was not guilt she was after, but capacity.

Then came Russia's turn. Russia has a special regard for Serbia ; she has a special interest in Serbia. Russians have shed their blood for Serbian independence many a time, for Serbia is a member of Russia's family, and she cannot see Serbia maltreated. Austria knew that. Germany knew it, and she turned round to Russia, and said : "I insist that you shall stand by with your arms folded whilst Austria is strangling your little brother to death." What answer did the Russian Slav give ?

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He gave the only answer that becomes a man. He turned to Austria, and said: "You lay hands on that little fellow, and I will tear your ramshackle Empire limb from limb." And he is doing it!

That is the story of two little nations. The world owes much to little nations—and to little men! This theory of bigness, this theory that you must have a *big* Empire, and a *big* nation, and a *big* man—well, long legs have their advantage in a retreat. The Kaiser's ancestor chose his warriors for their height, and that tradition has become a policy in Germany. Germany applies that ideal to nations, and will only allow six-foot-two nations to stand in the ranks. But ah! the world owes much to the little five-foot-five nations. The greatest art in the world was the work of little nations; the most enduring literature of the world came from little nations; the greatest literature of England came when she was a nation of the size of Belgium fighting a great Empire. The heroic deeds that thrill humanity through generations were the deeds of little nations fighting for their freedom. Yes, and the salvation of mankind came through a little nation. God has chosen little nations as the vessels by which He carries His choicest wines to the lips of humanity, to rejoice their hearts, to exalt their vision, to stimulate and strengthen their faith; and if we had stood by when two little nations were being crushed and broken by the brutal hands of barbarism, our shame would have rung down the everlasting ages.

But Germany insists that this is an attack by a lower civilisation upon a higher one. As a matter of fact, the attack was begun by the civilisation which calls itself the higher one. I am no apologist for Russia: she has perpetrated deeds of which I have no doubt her best sons are ashamed. What Empire has not? But Germany is the last Empire to point the finger of

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reproach at Russia. Russia has made sacrifices for freedom—great sacrifices. Do you remember the cry of Bulgaria when she was torn by the most insensate tyranny that Europe has ever seen? Who listened to that cry? The only answer of the higher civilisation was that the liberty of the Bulgarian peasants was not worth the life of a single Pomeranian grenadier. But the “rude barbarians of the North” sent their sons by the thousand to die for Bulgarian freedom. What about England? Go to Greece, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, France—in all those lands I could point out places where the sons of Britain have died for the freedom of those peoples. France has made sacrifices for the freedom of other lands than her own. Can you name a single country in the world for the freedom of which modern Prussia has ever sacrificed a single life? By the test of our faith, the highest standard of civilisation is the readiness to sacrifice for others.

I will not say a single word in disparagement of the German people. They are a great people, and have great qualities of head, and hand, and heart. I believe, in spite of recent events, that there is as great a store of kindness in the German peasant as in any peasant in the world; but he has been drilled into a false idea of civilisation. It is efficient, it is capable; but it is a hard civilisation; it is a selfish civilisation; it is a material civilisation. They cannot comprehend the action of Britain at the present moment; they say so. They say, “France we can understand; she is out for vengeance; she is out for territory—Alsace and Lorraine.” They say they can understand Russia; she is fighting for mastery—she wants Galicia. They can understand you fighting for vengeance—they can understand you fighting for mastery—they can understand you fighting for greed of territory; but they cannot

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understand a great Empire pledging its resources, pledging its might, pledging the lives of its children, pledging its very existence, to protect a little nation that seeks to defend herself. God made man in His own image, high of purpose, in the region of the spirit; German civilisation would re-create him in the image of a Diesel machine—precise, accurate, powerful, but with no room for soul to operate.

Have you read the Kaiser's speeches? If you have not a copy I advise you to buy one; they will soon be out of print, and you will not have many more of the same sort. They are full of the glitter and bluster of German militarism—"mailed fist," and "shining armour." Poor old mailed fist! Its knuckles are getting a little bruised. Poor shining armour! The shine is being knocked out of it. There is the same swagger and boastfulness running through the whole of the speeches. The extract which was given in the "*British Weekly*" this week is a very remarkable product as an illustration of the spirit we have to fight. It is the Kaiser's speech to his soldiers on the way to the front:—

"Remember that the German people are the chosen of God. On me, the German Emperor, the spirit of God has descended. I am His sword, His weapon, and His vicegerent. Woe to the disobedient, and death to cowards and unbelievers."

Lunacy is always distressing, but sometimes it is dangerous; and when you get it manifested in the head of the State, and it has become the policy of a great Empire, it is about time that it should be ruthlessly put away. I do not believe he meant all these speeches; it was simply the martial straddle he had acquired. But there were men around him who meant every word of them. This was their religion. Treaties? They tangle the feet of Germany in her advance. Cut them with the sword! Little nations? They hinder the

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advance of Germany. Trample them in the mire under the German heel ! The Russian Slav ? He challenges the supremacy of Germany and Europe. Hurl your legions at him and massacre him ! Britain ? She is a constant menace to the predominancy of Germany in the world. Wrest the trident out of her hand ! Christianity ? Sickly sentimentalism about sacrifice for others ! Poor pap for German digestion ! We will have a new diet. We will force it upon the world. It will be made in Germany—a diet of blood and iron. What remains ? Treaties have gone. The honour of nations has gone. Liberty has gone. What is left ? Germany ! Germany is left !—“ Deutschland über Alles ! ”

That is what we are fighting—that claim to predominancy of a material, hard civilisation, a civilisation which if it once rules and sways the world, liberty goes, democracy vanishes. And unless Britain and her sons come to the rescue it will be a dark day for humanity.

Have you followed the Prussian Junker and his doings ? We are not fighting the German people. The German people are under the heel of this military caste, and it will be a day of rejoicing for the German peasant, artisan and trader when the military caste is broken. You know its pretensions. They give themselves the airs of demi-gods. They walk the pavements, and civilians and their wives are swept into the gutter ; they have no right to stand in the way of a great Prussian soldier. Men, women, nations—they all have to go. He thinks all he has to say is “ We are in a hurry.” That is the answer he gave to Belgium—“ Rapidity of action is Germany’s greatest asset,” which means “ I am in a hurry ; clear out of my way.” You know the type of motorist, the terror of the roads, with a 60 horse-power car, who thinks the roads are made for him, and knocks down anybody who impedes the action of his car by a single mile an hour. The Prussian Junker is the

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road-hog of Europe. Small nationalities in his way are hurled to the roadside, bleeding and broken. Women and children are crushed under the wheels of his cruel car, and Britain is ordered out of his road. All I can say is this : if the old British spirit is alive in British hearts, that bully will be torn from his seat. Were he to win, it would be the greatest catastrophe that has befallen democracy since the day of the Holy Alliance and its ascendancy.

They think we cannot beat them. It will not be easy. It will be a long job ; it will be a terrible war ; but in the end we shall march through terror to triumph. We shall need all our qualities—every quality that Britain and its people possess—prudence in counsel, daring in action, tenacity in purpose, courage in defeat, moderation in victory ; in all things faith !

It has pleased them to believe and to preach the belief that we are a decadent and degenerate people. They proclaim to the world through their professors that we are a non-heroic nation skulking behind our mahogany counters, whilst we egg on more gallant races to their destruction. This is a description given of us in Germany—" a timorous craven nation, trusting to its Fleet." I think they are beginning to find their mistake out already—and there are half a million young men of Britain who have already registered a vow to their King that they will cross the seas and hurl that insult to British courage against its perpetrators on the battle-fields of France and Germany. We want half a million more ; and we shall get them.

Wales must continue doing her duty. I should like to see a Welsh Army in the field. I should like to see the race that faced the Norman for hundreds of years in a struggle for freedom, the race that helped to win Crecy, the race that fought for a generation under Glendower against the greatest captain in Europe—

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I should like to see that race give a good taste of its quality in this struggle in Europe ; and they are going to do it.

I envy you young people your opportunity. They have put up the age limit for the Army, but I am sorry to say I have marched a good many years even beyond that. It is a great opportunity, an opportunity that only comes once in many centuries to the children of men. For most generations sacrifice comes in drab and weariness of spirit. It comes to you to-day, and it comes to-day to us all, in the form of the glow and thrill of a great movement for liberty that impels millions throughout Europe to the same noble end. It is a great War for the emancipation of Europe from the thralldom of a military caste which has thrown its shadows upon two generations of men, and is now plunging the world into a welter of bloodshed and death. Some have already given their lives. There are some who have given more than their own lives ; they have given the lives of those who are dear to them. I honour their courage, and may God be their comfort and their strength. But their reward is at hand ; those who have fallen have died consecrated deaths. They have taken their part in the making of a new Europe—a new world. I can see signs of its coming in the glare of the battlefield.

The people will gain more by this struggle in all lands than they comprehend at the present moment. It is true they will be free of the greatest menace to their freedom. That is not all. There is something infinitely greater and more enduring which is emerging already out of this great conflict—a new patriotism, richer, nobler, and more exalted than the old. I see amongst all classes, high and low, shedding themselves of selfishness, a new recognition that the honour of the country does not depend merely on the maintenance of its glory in the stricken field, but also in protecting its homes

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from distress. It is bringing a new outlook for all classes. The great flood of luxury and sloth which had submerged the land is receding, and a new Britain is appearing. We can see for the first time the fundamental things that matter in life, and that have been obscured from our vision by the tropical growth of prosperity.

May I tell you in a simple parable what I think this War is doing for us? I know a valley in North Wales, between the mountains and the sea. It is a beautiful valley, snug, comfortable, sheltered by the mountains from all the bitter blasts. But it is very enervating, and I remember how the boys were in the habit of climbing the hill above the village to have a glimpse of the great mountains in the distance, and to be stimulated and freshened by the breezes which came from the hilltops, and by the great spectacle of their grandeur. We have been living in a sheltered valley for generations. We have been too comfortable and too indulgent, many, perhaps, too selfish, and the stern hand of fate has scourged us to an elevation where we can see the great everlasting things that matter for a nation—the great peaks we had forgotten, of Honour, Duty, Patriotism, and, clad in glittering white, the great pinnacle of Sacrifice pointing like a rugged finger to Heaven. We shall descend into the valleys again; but as long as the men and women of this generation last, they will carry in their hearts the image of those great mountain peaks whose foundations are not shaken, though Europe rock and sway in the convulsions of a great war.

Rt. Hon. D. LLOYD GEORGE

(Chancellor of the Exchequer)

In the House of Commons, Nov. 27, 1914

THIS is the first great War that has ever been fought under modern conditions. In the great French Napoleonic Wars practically all the countries of the world were self-contained. Great Britain had one-third of its present population. It raised its own food, and not only that, but it raised its own raw materials with the exception of gold and sub-tropical products like cotton. Iron, coal, copper, and tin were all produced in this country. The total imports and exports of the country together came to about £86,000,000 in those days. Last year the imports and exports put together came to something like £1,400,000,000 or £1,500,000,000. That shows how different the conditions are with which we are confronted in this country now, as compared with the conditions with which our forefathers were confronted during the great European wars at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The international trade of the world at the commencement of this War was valued at about £8,000,000,000. I suppose that at the time of the Napoleonic Wars it would have been only about £200,000,000. But what is much more remarkable is the unique and commanding position of Great Britain in that international trade. It is something without parallel in the history of the commerce of the world.

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We had not merely our own business to run ; we were an essential part of the machinery that ran the whole international trade of the world. We provided the capital to raise the produce ; we carried half the produce, not merely of our own country, but of the whole world. More than that, we provided the capital that moved that produce from one part of the world to another, not merely for ourselves, but for other countries.

I ask anyone to pick up just one little bit of paper, one bill of exchange, to find out what we are doing. Take the cotton trade of the world. The cotton is moved first of all from the plantations, say, to the Mississippi, then it is moved down to New Orleans ; then it is moved from there either to Germany or Great Britain or elsewhere. Every movement there is represented by a paper signed either here in London or in Manchester or Liverpool ; one signature practically is responsible for the whole of those transactions. Not merely that, but when the United States of America bought silk or tea in China the payment was made through London. By means of these documents accepted in London, New York paid for the tea that was bought from China. We were transacting far more than the whole of our own business ; we were transacting half the business of the world as well by means of these paper transactions. What is also important to establish is this : that the paper which was issued from London has become part of the currency of commerce throughout the world.

It is remarkable how the whole of this huge business is done with very little transfer of gold. London last year received £50,000,000 in gold, and paid out £45,000,000. All the rest was paper. What happened ? All this fine, delicate paper machinery crashed into a great War affecting more than half, and very nearly

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two-thirds, of the whole population of the world. Confusion was inevitable, and undoubtedly there was very great confusion. It was just as if one gave a violent kick to an ant-hill. For a short time there was much bewildering consternation in all the marts and exchanges in the world. The top of the ant-hill was off, and for a moment there was great fright. All the material was there, but there was a very considerable panic, because War had never been waged by this country or any other country in such conditions before.

The first thing that I would like to say about it is that the deadlock which ensued was not due to any lack of credit in this country. It was due entirely to the fact that there was a failure of remittances from abroad. Take the whole of these bills of exchange. There were bills representing between £350,000,000 and £500,000,000. I do not know what it was between these two figures. I have been making some enquiries, but it was quite impossible to find out yet. But there was that amount of paper out with British signatures at that time. Most of that had been discounted. The cash had been found by British sources, and the failure was not due to the fact that Great Britain had not paid her creditors abroad. It was due entirely to the fact that those abroad did not pay Great Britain. I think that it is very important—from the point of view of British credit—to have that thoroughly understood, for when the Moratorium came, and there appeared something like a failure of British credit, it was not a British failure at all. It was because we could not get remittances from other countries. We had already paid, but it was vital to the credit and good name of this country that these bits of paper, which are circulated throughout the globe, with British names upon them, with names that

have been associated with British trade and commerce—it was vital to the good name and credit of this country, to its continuity of trade and its character, that they should not be dishonoured. What really happened was that there was a complete cessation of credit, a breakdown of the exchanges. It was exactly as if a shell had broken an arch in an aqueduct, and there was a cessation of the flow that had been going on before, and what we had to do was temporarily to repair the arch so that the flow should continue.

The first thing that happened was, as I have pointed out, that the exchanges broke down, and there were most curious paradoxes and absurdities in the position. Take the Argentine Republic. The Argentine Republic owes Great Britain about £400,000,000 in fixed or fluid capital. We were creditors to the extent of £400,000,000. There was the debtor, and yet our credit system had broken down so completely that it did not allow us to buy a single cargo of frozen meat. The Argentine would not allow us to buy a single cargo. For the moment we had to make special arrangements for that reason. I heard of the case of Valparaíso—I forget whether it was the Corporation of Valparaíso who owed the money to this country, but it was a considerable sum of money. They had the cash ready, but they could not pay. Why? Because there was no paper that was available. London paper, for the moment, was out of the market. On an ordinary occasion they would have bought paper on London, but they could not do it in that way, and they would have had to send twenty or thirty thousand sovereigns, or gold, and that was quite impossible. We could neither buy nor sell, although the whole world owed us money. Take the case of the United States of America, which is still more remarkable. America, I suppose, owes us nearly a thousand millions in fixed

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and floating capital, but we could not buy. It was impossible to do any business. Why? The exchanges had broken down, this paper machine had crumpled and somehow got out of order, and the result was that no business was possible.

What we had to consider was this: Supposing this machine had been left crumpled and broken for the moment—out of repair; if you had left it for a month like that what would have happened? What did happen? Mills were closed, factories were shut up, and thousands of people were thrown out of work. Look at the unemployment chart. Look at what happened in the United States of America in 1907—on the failure of one or two banks. Credit was shaken, hundreds of thousands of people were thrown out of work, and the distress was unutterable. It is really not fair to represent that we were doing something to save a few people, when what we were doing was to save British industry, British commerce, British labour, and British life. What happened? We had no time, and there were two things to be dealt with. The exchanges had completely broken down. Business had come to an end, and the country that depended more on international trade than any other country in the world found international trade at a standstill. We were as completely isolated for the moment as if we had had an alien fleet round our shores, because the exchanges had come to an end, and ships were being kept in harbour. We had, first of all, to consider what to do, and here the Government invited the assistance of men of very great experience in every walk of life and every department. We considered it a very great national emergency, and that the consequences of a false step might be very serious for the trade of this country.

We invited some of the leading manufacturers of the country, bankers of the country, and those concerned

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with the financial interests of the country, and we eventually set up a permanent Committee to assist the Government. I have already acknowledged in this House our indebtedness to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain), who served on that Committee, and loyally and patriotically assisted us throughout the whole of this great crisis. We have also had the advantage of the advice, not only of one of the most distinguished predecessors of the right hon. Gentleman and myself, Lord St. Aldwyn, to whom I cannot feel too grateful for the advice which he has given throughout the whole of this emergency, but we have had the assistance of Lord Revelstoke, a very able financier. We had also, of course, the Governor of the Bank of England, and the Lord Chief Justice of England. The Prime Minister has already stated publicly how indebted we are to the Lord Chief Justice. He has practically given the whole of his time during the last three or four months to this work, acting, with our assistance, as a Court of Appeal from the banks. Acting upon their advice, we decided that something must be done, and done immediately, in order to avert a very serious run on the banks and a general disaster. We first of all declared a Moratorium—at first a limited Moratorium, so as to give us time to look round.

Then we decided that some step should be taken in order to restore the international exchange, and the Government agreed to advance to bankers at the Bank rate Treasury Notes to the extent of 20 per cent. of their deposits, thereby placing a balance at their disposal, a virgin fund to the value of £225,000,000, to be employed in financing any exceptional demands for accommodation in this difficult period. At first the bankers availed themselves of this currency facility to the amount of nearly £13,000,000, and I am glad

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to say that this has been reduced until it is now only £244,000. The mere knowledge of these currency facilities being available gave confidence. The total amount of the currency notes outstanding is £33,890,000; this consists of 25,696,000 £1 notes and 16,388,000 10s. notes.

That was the first step. The second step we took was this: to guarantee the due payment of all bills accepted by British houses, and to offer the accepting houses reasonable time in which to collect the debts due to them, and to meet the bills. The Bank of England was empowered to discount at 2 per cent. over Bank rate, varying all such bills of exchange as were customarily discounted by them, and also good trade bills, and the acceptances of such foreign and Colonial firms and agencies as were established in Great Britain. Out of that 7 per cent. $2\frac{1}{2}$ goes to the Government as insurance for any possible loss, 4 per cent. goes to the Bank as interest, and $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the part they took in carrying through the transaction. That is the way that has been divided. We felt here was Great Britain with four thousand millions of good foreign securities, the greater part of those securities in countries utterly unaffected by the War; and in addition to that, I suppose, assets in this country—collieries, land, factories, and harbours, all the property created and developed by the trade and skill and energy of our people, would be worth another thirteen thousand millions. So that any estimate of our national assets would be eighteen thousand millions, and we felt that with assets of that amount to allow the credit of this country to be even in doubt for twenty-four hours in respect of £350,000,000, most of it owing to our own people, if not all, would be a criminal act of negligence on the part of the Government. We decided, therefore, that the time had come to

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hypothecate the public credit, the credit of the State, in order to restore those exchanges, with the restoration of which the trade and commerce and the industry of the country was concerned, and upon which all classes of the community, whether they were traders, whether they were financiers, whether they were workpeople, or artisans, depended for their daily life.

These are the three steps that we took. The first was to prepare a Moratorium; the second was the issue of currency facilities; and the third was to guarantee the due payment of those bills. By those steps the unimpeachable character of the British bill of exchange has been maintained, and a financial catastrophe, possibly the greatest the world had ever seen, has been entirely averted. We had two things to consider: The first was the practical consideration that one week's stoppage of business in this country would have entailed more loss to the country than any conceivable loss from pledging the credit of the State. The second consideration was that it was vital to the good name of this country, because we have to live after the War, that this type of British paper, which has been common currency throughout the world, should be unimpeached, and that in the future no one should be able to say: "Don't you trust that British paper, because if you remember in the year 1914, in a day of crisis, it was dishonoured." We could not have allowed that. If we had done that we should have betrayed our trust as a Government, and I think we should have justified impeachment as a people who at the hour of the need of our country had not the courage to stand up for the public credit. That is really why we took that step at that time. We had to take the best agency we could at the moment, and I think we took the right agency. Were we to accept every bill that was dumped upon us? That

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was one way of doing it. Were we to exercise any discretion at all? If so, it is perfectly clear the Treasury could not do it. We have not the machinery. We have not got the equipment. The Treasury officials have not got the training for the purpose of exercising discrimination of this kind. The Bank of England have been doing this business always, and these bills had been constantly passing there.

These bills are constantly passing across the counter of the Bank of England, and they know what the value of each bill is. There was a good deal in an answer given to me once when I asked: "How do you know the difference between a good and a bad bill?" and a very, very shrewd and sagacious man said: "By smelling it." There is a good deal in that, as every man of business knows. He cannot give the reason, but the man who has been in the business does know the difference instinctively between a good and a bad bill.

In the main it is better to trust to the sort of trained instinct of these men who know somehow a bad bill by the feel, just the way they feel bank notes at the Bank of England. I am told they go through a bundle of them and just by a mere touch know the note which is false and throw it out. You have got the trained sense of the financier, who knows on the whole what is good business and what is bad business.

Let me first of all say this: When we gave those facilities to the banks, it was on the distinct understanding that they were to give facilities to the traders. At first we had some complaints. I am not criticising the banks, because I think there were very unusual conditions. They were trustees for their depositors. They were naturally apprehensive that if they launched out in that condition of affairs they might be doing injustice to the men who left their money in their charge.

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Let me say this, we had more complaints from England than Scotland. We had very few from Scotland. The Scottish banks showed very great courage right through. I know it is not merely in the field of finance that the Scottish show courage, as we know very well by recent events. We had more complaints from England, but they have completely vanished, and confidence has been completely restored in the breast of the most timid bank manager. We do not hear complaints from any part of the Kingdom now.

The total amount of bills discounted on the Government guarantees has been £120,000,000. That shows that of the £350,000,000 to £500,000,000 worth of bills which were out at the outbreak of the War most have been disposed of in the ordinary course. That is very, very satisfactory. There are £12,500,000 still running. The total amount which has been advanced by the Bank of England to acceptors of pre-Moratorium bills to enable them to pay their acceptances at maturity comes to £60,386,000. It is estimated that by the end of the War there will be about £50,000,000 worth of bills in what I may call cold storage.

Only £50,000,000 will have to be put on one side either for dealing with belligerent countries or for other reasons of that kind—I think about one-ninth of the total. I have been asked for an estimate of the loss. The first question I would ask is, How long is the War going to last? The second is, What will be the issue? We are owed money. A good deal of this money is owed by Russia.

Russia and Germany, I think, are countries which on the whole are represented in the largest proportion in the £50,000,000 which will be still uncollected at the end of the War. How much of that will be uncollected depends upon the length of the War and the issue. The more devastation the greater the loss we shall

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sustain. But this much I will say, there will not be a penny loss in respect of the great accepting houses employed. The second thing I should like to say is this, that the total losses upon the whole of these transactions will not be equal to the cost of a single week of carrying on the War, and it saves British industry and commerce from one of the worst panics.

Before we brought the Moratorium to an end—there was great anxiety to bring it to an end, and there was also great apprehension—there were three things we had to consider. The first was the people whose business was especially affected by the War, and practically ruined by the War. They cannot re-establish their business until the War is over. There was a case the other day brought to the notice of the Prime Minister and myself in connection with the fishing trade in Scotland with Norway. Until the War is over that industry cannot be re-established. That was the first thing we had to consider. The next was the restoration of the foreign exchange. There was still trouble in spite of what we had done. And the third thing we had to consider was the position of the Stock Exchange.

With regard to the first—that is, business affected by the War—we thought the best way to meet that was by the passing of the Bill which enacted that no man could put any legal process into operation without first of all seeking the sanction of the Courts ; and if the debtor were able to establish the fact that his inability to meet his debts was due to circumstances arising out of the War, then relief was to be given to him during the period of the War and for six months after. I think the fishermen of Scotland will find that that affords complete protection in their case.

The second was the restoration of the foreign exchange. In spite of our having undertaken the discounting of bills there was still trouble in foreign exchanges : for

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this reason, as long as the drawers and endorsers of the bills were still held responsible they did not care to undertake any fresh liabilities, and those who were trusting to their credit were a little apprehensive of doing so, as long as this huge liability hung over their heads, until after the War. Foreign banks, foreign drawers, foreign endorsers, and endorsers and drawers in this country, and discounters were very chary of incurring fresh liability unless other liabilities could be liquidated. We found that was rather interfering with the action of the exchanges, and that they were not being restored as speedily as we hoped. There were two alternatives before us, and I will put them before the House. The first one was that the State should become an international banker and should guarantee all British acceptances against produce after the commencement of the War. The difficulty was that there was no machinery, and we should have had to act with the same old machinery. The accepting houses have their representatives and agents in every part of the world, and they know who they are dealing with, but the Treasury does not, neither does the Bank of England. The Bank of England has not this machinery, but the accepting houses know exactly what is happening in the particular countries where these transactions take place, and therefore even if State credit had been hypothecated it would have been pledged through the same agencies as before, and we should have practically been in the position of guarantors in respect of those bankers and accepting houses. The next alternative is practically the restoration of the old machinery. You could only do that by releasing the endorsers and the drawers and simply retaining the liability of the acceptors. The moment you did that the endorsers and the drawers were free, and there was no further liability and they could undertake fresh business. Legal difficulties might

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have arisen in retaining the liability of the endorser and the drawer unless the bill was duly presented. By the very nature of the transaction we were postponing payment of these debts until twelve months after the War, and I am not at all sure that by that transaction we were not really releasing foreign endorsers and drawers when you take that into account. The second alternative was to attempt to restore the old machinery of business by releasing the drawer and the endorser, and maintaining the liability of the acceptor.

I now come to the Stock Exchange. What is the difficulty about the Stock Exchange? It is not the character of the transaction, but the fact that you had £70,000,000 or £80,000,000 of securities hypothecated in respect of debts incurred before the War began. If the banks had pressed for these debts what would have happened? The securities would have been placed on the market, and nothing could have been worse for the trade and commerce of this country than that you should dump £70,000,000 or £80,000,000 worth of securities on the market, because the value of those securities would have been reduced to a perfectly deplorable position, and the Government, who are really the only borrowers in the market at the present time, would be placed in a position in which we could not raise money except at incredible rates of interest. We have to consider not merely trade, because if the value of securities went down the whole position of the banks is undermined, and all great financial agents are in the same position, and so are the insurance companies, bankers, and traders who have hypothecated their securities in the bank to carry on their business. The House knows very well that if you put a considerable number of securities on the market, although they may not appear considerable in proportion to the whole, still if it is more than the market can digest at a given

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time it would reduce the value of those securities out of proportion, and the market would be absolutely destroyed for borrowing purposes. We have to consider that.

Therefore we were asked whether, if they would guarantee that these securities would not be put on to the market until twelve months after the War, we would be prepared to advance money for the purpose of enabling some of those who had advanced to get some of the cash to enable them to carry on until the War was over. There was money advanced by the banks, private institutions, and corporations. Companies, for instance, had advanced money which they would otherwise want for dividends. That is a very easy way of making a short loan and getting a good rate of interest. Out of a total of about £70,000,000 or £80,000,000, £50,000,000 or £60,000,000 has been advanced by the bankers, and only £20,000,000 as against securities by the other firms and institutions and corporations. With reference to the banks, we have said that we would not advance them a single penny because we have assisted them with bills of exchange and currency facilities and they have to make their own arrangements with the Stock Exchange, but we said that we would advance 60 per cent. of the value of the securities on the 29th of July against the rest, on the express condition that the banks undertook not to put their securities on the market until twelve months after the War. It was a good bargain for the Government, because, without hypothe-cating a single penny of Government credit, we got a guarantee that £50,000,000 worth of securities would be withheld until twelve months after the War, and the market would not be depressed by that amount. In order to show what a good bargain it is for the Government, take one of these things which will help to restore confidence. Settlement day had been regarded

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with considerable apprehension. The mere fact of this being done by everybody allayed apprehension on the Stock Exchange. No one knew what was going to happen, and there were all sorts of rumours which would have shaken public credit, but it passed so quietly that it did not interfere with the huge loan which was being put upon the market at the same time.

In addition to that there is not a single application for Government credit. I do not say there will not be in the future, but up to the present it has not been necessary for the Government to advance a single £5 note for that purpose. I think, as a matter of business, it was worth our while, because we are practically the greatest borrowers as long as this War lasts, and we must have a market in which we can borrow. This is vital to the War and to the taxpayer. It is vital to us to prevent the market, if I may use the phrase, having the bottom knocked out of it because borrowing under those conditions would be very disastrous to us. I think what we have done is good business for the taxpayers. We have saved money by it, and we have not up to the present advanced a single penny. More than that, it was very important for us that we should have some control over the Stock Exchange during the War, and we made it a condition of coming to their assistance at all that they should not open until they had the sanction of the Treasury, and that they should not open then except on conditions imposed by the Treasury. Under this bargain with the Stock Exchange the Treasury can impose any condition which we regard as essential. They can impose any condition as to the kind of business they are to do, and as to the conditions under which they can transact their business. They can do that before the Stock Exchange opens. I think, therefore, that it will be admitted that it was a very useful piece of business for us to transact with the

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Stock Exchange. We incur no risks, but get tremendous advantages in return, which it was absolutely necessary in the public interest that we should consider.

The other transaction was with regard to the Cotton Exchange in Liverpool. There, by practically the same transaction as with the London Stock Exchange, we have been able to open the Liverpool Cotton Exchange, though difficulties were experienced there in buying cotton for the purposes of the Lancashire business. We have been able by a guarantee of the same kind, which we were prepared to give, to open the Cotton Exchange in Liverpool, and not a penny has been asked from the Government in respect of that guarantee.

There are a good many traders who have been selling goods to the Continent without any bills of exchange. There was a good deal of business done with Germany, and I think with Russia, with no bills of exchange at all. It was just a direct open transaction, the sort of transaction you would have as between one trader in this country and another. What we did with respect to bills of exchange did not cover those cases. For example, Bolton, I believe, has a very large trade with Germany. They sell an enormous quantity of cotton goods to Germany. They have no bills of exchange. They debit their German debtor with the amount, send in their bill, and get their cheque in return. When the War was declared there were hundreds of thousands of pounds, I am not sure it did not reach millions, due from Germany to Bolton. This was a very serious thing for the Bolton mills. I have no doubt the Bolton mills got credit from their banks in respect of that transaction. But when you come to the next transaction you do not get credit unless you raise the money in respect of the other transaction. That is how the machine works, and that was the trouble in this case. They could not get their money, and there was

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no credit in their banks in consequence. That not only applies to Bolton; it applies also to Bradford very largely; to the border boroughs, and also to other industries as well. I am not sure that it does not apply to the North of Scotland.

The difficulty we were in here was that we were not re-establishing a currency as in the case of bills of exchange. We decided that it would be desirable for us to give assistance to the extent of 50 per cent. of the face value of the debt on the condition that the local banks undertook 25 per cent. of the ultimate loss. It was suggested that we ought to have made all the advance. The difficulty there was that we knew nothing about these debts; we had no means of ascertaining anything at all about them. We could have set up committees locally, but I do not know what sort of committees we could have had. We could not have had the local chambers of commerce, because they were all more or less involved. We could not have had the banks, because they also were involved. But if the banks were prepared to undertake 25 per cent. of the liability that was quite good enough for us. They knew their men; they undoubtedly knew the kind of business they were transacting, and, if they were prepared to advance to that extent, we felt we were perfectly safe in shouldering the rest. That is why we persisted, in spite of some pressure from the banks, upon making them liable for 25 per cent. of the debts before we advanced a penny. Applications have already come in in respect of this transaction to the extent of £16,000. At present they have not been adjudicated upon, but we hope to be able to do something at the earliest possible moment.

I think I have now shown what happened. I have shown what has happened with bills of exchange. Out of £300,000,000 or £400,000,000 or £500,000,000 of bills

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of exchange which were based upon British credit at the beginning of the War, all the money has been paid, and no foreigner can point to any bill of any established house which has been dishonoured. In future they know that they can conduct business with the assured knowledge that they are safe. That means something which is invaluable to British trade in future. What is still more is that there are only £50,000,000 left of that. The machinery of exchange has been re-established. I have a letter to-day from some gentleman in the discount market to say that the condition of things is absolutely satisfactory in the discount market. In spite of this great world War we are still supreme in international trade and commerce. The British money market is in a better position than any other market in the world. Although we are engaged in this huge War, they are coming here to borrow at the present time. We are conducting a War which is costing us £300,000,000, £400,000,000, or £500,000,000 a year, and still other countries are coming here to borrow from us. The first day the Bank reopened after the outbreak of War the bullion at the Bank of England was £26,000,000. We have suspended no Bank Acts. We have suspended no payments. We have just maintained exactly the same conditions as we did before. The Bank rate, which is always put up to prevent gold leaving the country, was put down to 5 per cent., and the gold in the Bank of England at the present moment amounts to £85,500,000. That is very satisfactory.

Here we have to raise the largest loan ever raised in the history of the world for any purpose. We did it, and the success of the loan is a full justification for the steps we have taken. What are the circumstances? It was the largest loan ever raised. We had already raised £90,000,000 for the same purpose, and, practically, we were raising £440,000,000 of money in the same

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market for the same purpose and under the same conditions. We had just got through the most serious financial crisis that this country had ever seen. A Moratorium in which we protected debtors against their debts, if called upon, had only just come to an end, and, what was still more serious, as anyone knows who has had to deal with transactions of that kind, the machinery which had always played an important part in the system of floating loans—the Stock Exchange—was closed at the time, and those who remember the loans raised during the late war know the part the Stock Exchange takes in helping operations of that kind. I am not referring merely to speculation on the Stock Exchange on any Government issue. I am referring to the purely legitimate part they take. The small investor is not a very ready man. If you tell him he has to make up his mind to apply within a week he does not do it. He only does it through the agency of people who give him expert advice, and the Stock Exchange is useful, because they take what they call large lumps of great loans like this, and afterwards gradually distribute them amongst their customers. They call their attention to the investment, and they are able in time to thus absorb the whole amount allotted to them, no doubt on terms favourable to themselves, but also equally helpful to those who go in for these loans. The absence of machinery of that kind at this moment was a serious detriment. If the Stock Exchange had been open we would have had the loan applied for several times over. They would have made enormous applications, and taken time for distribution of the allotment.

What was the result of our appeal to the public, and to the great financial interests of the country? We have not merely raised the whole of the loan, but it has been over-subscribed, and the most remarkable thing about it is not merely that the great financial interests came

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in—and I very gladly acknowledge that they did step in with spirit and give us every assistance—that is not the remarkable thing, for it has always happened in the past—the feature of this loan is the enormous number of small applicants who came forward. On the occasion of the last loan for the Boer War, these small applicants numbered about 21,000. Now, in this case, they number nearly 100,000, and we have been glad to give the first chance of co-operation to the small capitalist. The first allotments will be made to the small applicants, and I think that is generally agreed to be the right course. It is undoubtedly a good investment, but the feature of the case is that the small investor has shown his patriotism by the readiness with which he has responded. He has not waited to see how the thing will go on the market. He has just stepped in, and we have been able, not merely to carry this great financial transaction through, but, by the ready response of the small investor, we have raised the hugest sum of money ever raised in any country, without any of the expedients to which Germany had to resort in order to raise a much smaller loan at a higher rate of interest. In addition to that, trade is improving. Unemployment is going down. Confidence has undoubtedly been restored. British credit has stood the enormous strain placed upon it, and the market has been less affected than any market in the world. I do not know what further stress and strain may be placed upon the resources of this country, but that which it has already resisted, and the way in which it has resisted, fills me with the conviction that British credit is built on solid foundations which no foreseeable contingency can destroy.

Rt. Hon. D. LLOYD GEORGE

(Prime Minister)

In the House of Commons, Dec. 19, 1916

I APPEAR before the House of Commons to-day with the most terrible responsibility that can fall upon the shoulders of any living man as the chief adviser of the Crown in the most gigantic War in which the country has ever been engaged—a War upon the events of which its destiny depends. It is the greatest War ever waged. The burdens are the heaviest that have been cast upon this or any other country, and the issues which hang on it are the gravest that have been attached to any conflict in which humanity has ever been involved. The responsibilities of the new Government have been suddenly accentuated by a declaration made by the German Chancellor, and I propose to deal with that at once. The statement made by him in the German Reichstag has been followed by a Note presented to us by the United States of America without any note or comment. The answer that will be given by the Government will be given in full accord with all our brave Allies. Naturally there has been an interchange of views, not upon the Note, because it only recently arrived, but upon the speech which propelled it, and, inasmuch as the Note itself is practically only a reproduction or certainly a paraphrase of the speech, the subject-matter of the Note itself has been discussed informally between

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the Allies, and I am very glad to be able to state that we have each of us, separately and independently, arrived at identical conclusions.

I am very glad that the first answer that was given to the statement of the German Chancellor was given by France and by Russia. They have the unquestionable right to give the first answer to such an invitation. The enemy is still on their soil. Their sacrifices have been greater. The answer they have given has already appeared in all the papers, and I simply stand here to-day on behalf of the Government to give clear and definite support to the statement which they have already made. Let us examine what the statement is and examine it calmly. Any man or set of men who wantonly, or without sufficient cause, prolonged a terrible conflict like this would have on his soul a crime that oceans could not cleanse. Upon the other hand it is equally true that any man or set of men who, out of a sense of weariness or despair, abandoned the struggle without achieving the high purpose for which he had entered into it when nearly fulfilled would have been guilty of the costliest act of poltroonery ever perpetrated by any statesman. I should like to quote the very well-known words of Abraham Lincoln under similar conditions :—

We accepted this war for an object, and a worthy object, and the war will end when that object is attained. Under God I hope it will never end until that time.

Are we likely to achieve that object by accepting the invitation of the German Chancellor? That is the only question we have to put to ourselves. There has been some talk about proposals of peace. What are the proposals? There are none. To enter at the invitation of Germany, proclaiming herself victorious, without any knowledge of the proposals

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she proposes to make, into a conference is to put our heads into a noose with the rope end in the hands of Germany. This country is not altogether without experience in these matters. This is not the first time we have fought a great military despotism that was overshadowing Europe, and it will not be the first time we shall have helped to overthrow military despotism. We have an uncomfortable historical memory of these things, and we can recall when one of the greatest of these despots had a purpose to serve in the working of his nefarious schemes. His favourite device was to appear in the garb of the Angel of Peace. He usually appeared under two conditions. Firstly, when he wished for time to assimilate his conquests or to reorganise his forces for fresh conquests; and, secondly, when his subjects showed symptoms of fatigue and war weariness, and invariably the appeal was always made in the name of humanity, and he demanded an end to bloodshed, at which he professed himself to be horrified, but for which he himself was mainly responsible. Our ancestors were taken in once, and bitterly they and Europe rued it. The time was devoted to reorganising his forces for a deadlier attack than ever upon the liberties of Europe, and examples of that kind cause us to regard this Note with a considerable measure of reminiscent disquiet. We feel that we ought to know, before we can give favourable consideration to such an invitation, that Germany is prepared to accede to the only terms on which it is possible for peace to be obtained and maintained in Europe. What are those terms? They have been repeatedly stated by all the leading statesmen of the Allies. My right hon. friend has stated them repeatedly here and outside, and all I can do is to quote, as my right hon. friend the Leader of the House did last week,

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practically the statement of the terms put forward by my right hon. friend :

“ Restitution, reparation, guarantee against repetition,” so that there shall be no mistake, and it is important that there should be no mistake in a matter of life and death to millions.

Let me repeat again—complete restitution, full reparation, effectual guarantee. Did the German Chancellor use a single phrase to indicate that he was prepared to concede such terms? Was there a hint of restitution, was there any suggestion of reparation, was there any indication of any security for the future that this outrage on civilisation would not be again perpetrated at the first profitable opportunity? The very substance and style of the speech constitutes a denial of peace on the only terms on which peace is possible. He is not even conscious now that Germany has committed any offence against the rights of free nations. Listen to this from the Note :

“ Not for an instant have they (they being the Central Powers) swerved from the conviction that the respect of the rights of other nations is not in any degree incompatible with their own rights and legitimate interests.”

When did they discover that? Where was the respect for the rights of other nations in Belgium and Serbia? Oh, that was self-defence! Menaced, I suppose, by the overwhelming armies of Belgium, the Germans had been intimidated into invading that country, to the burning of Belgian cities and villages, to the massacring of thousands of inhabitants, old and young, to the carrying of the survivors into bondage; yea, and they were carrying them into slavery at the very moment when this precious Note was being written about the unswerving conviction as to the respect of the rights of other nations! I suppose these outrages are the legitimate

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interest of Germany ? We must know. That is not the mood of peace. If excuses of this kind for palpable crimes can be put forward two and a-half years after the exposure by grim facts of the guarantee, is there, I ask in all solemnity, any guarantee that similar subterfuges will not be used in the future to overthrow any treaty of peace you may enter into with Prussian militarism ? This Note and that speech prove that not yet have they learned the very alphabet of respect for the rights of others. Without reparation, peace is impossible. Are all these outrages against humanity on land and on sea to be liquidated by a few pious phrases about humanity ? Is there to be no reckoning for them ? Are we to grasp the hand that perpetrated these atrocities in friendship without any reparation being tendered or given ? I am told that we are to begin, Germany helping us, to exact reparation for all future violence committed after the War. We have begun already. It has already cost us so much, and we must exact it now so as not to leave such a grim inheritance to our children. Much as we all long for peace, deeply as we are horrified with war, this Note and the speech which propelled it afford us small encouragement and hope for an honourable and lasting compact.

What hope is given by that speech that the whole root and cause of this great bitterness, the arrogant spirit of the Prussian military caste, will not be as dominant as ever if we patch up a peace now ? Why, the very speech in which these peace suggestions are made resound to the boasts of Prussian military triumphs of victory. It is a long pæan over the victory of von Hindenburg and his legions. This very appeal for peace is delivered ostentatiously from the triumphant chariot of Prussian militarism. We must keep a steadfast eye upon the purpose for which we

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entered the War, otherwise the great sacrifices we have been making will be all in vain. The German Note states that it was for the defence of their existence and the freedom of national development that the Central Powers were constrained to take up arms. Such phrases cannot even deceive those who pen them. They are intended to delude the German nation into supporting the designs of the Prussian military caste. Whoever wishes to put an end to their existence and the freedom of their national development? We welcomed their development as long as it was on the paths of peace—the greater their development upon that road, the greater will all humanity be enriched by their efforts. That was not our design, and it is not our purpose now. The Allies entered this War to defend themselves against the aggression of the Prussian military domination, and, having begun it, they must insist that it can only end with the most complete and effective guarantee against the possibility of that caste ever again disturbing the peace of Europe. Prussia, since she got into the hands of that caste, has been a bad neighbour—arrogant, threatening, bullying, litigious, shifting boundaries at her will, taking one fair field after another from weaker neighbours, and adding them to her own domain. With her belt ostentatiously full of weapons of offence, and ready at a moment's notice to use them, she has always been an unpleasant, disturbing neighbour in Europe. No wonder that she got thoroughly on the nerves of Europe. There was no peace near where she dwelt. It is difficult for those who were fortunate enough to live thousands of miles away to understand what it has meant to those who lived near her boundaries. Even here, with the protection of the broad seas between us, we know what a disturbing

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factor the Prussians were with their constant naval menace, but even we can hardly realise what it has meant to France and to Russia. Several times there were threats directed to them within the lifetime of this generation which presented the alternative of war or humiliation. There were many of us who hoped that internal influence in Germany would have been strong enough to check and ultimately to eliminate this hectoring. All our hopes proved illusory, and now that this great War has been forced by the Prussian military leaders upon France, Russia, Italy, and ourselves, it would be folly, it would be cruel folly, not to see to it that this swashbuckling through the streets of Europe to the disturbance of all harmless and peaceful citizens shall be dealt with now as an offence against the law of nations. The mere word that led Belgium to her own destruction will not satisfy Europe any more. We all believed it. We all trusted it. It gave way at the first pressure of temptation, and Europe has been plunged into this vortex of blood. We will, therefore, wait until we hear what terms and guarantees the German Government offer other than those, better than those, surer than those, which she so lightly broke, and meanwhile we shall put our trust in an unbroken Army rather than in a broken faith. For the moment I do not think it would be advisable for me to add anything upon this particular invitation. A formal reply will be delivered by the Allies in the course of the next few days.

I shall therefore proceed with the other part of the task which I have in front of me. What is the urgent task in front of the Government? To complete, and make even more effective, the mobilisation of all our national resources—a mobilisation which has been going on since the commencement of the War—so as to enable the nation

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to bear the strain, however prolonged, and to march through to victory, however lengthy, and however exhaustive may be the journey. It is a gigantic task, and let me give this word of warning: If there be any who have given their confidence to the new Administration in expectation of a speedy victory they will be doomed to disappointment. I am not going to paint a gloomy picture of the military situation—if I did it would not be a true picture—but I must paint a stern picture, because that accurately represents the facts. I have always insisted on the nation being taught to realise the actual facts of this War. I have attached enormous importance to that, at the risk of being characterised as a pessimist. I believe that a good many of our misunderstandings have arisen from exaggerated views which have been taken about successes and from a disposition to treat as trifling real set-backs. To imagine that you can only get the support and the help, and the best help, of a strong people by concealing difficulties is to show a fundamental misconception. The British people possess as sweet a tooth as anybody, and they like pleasant things put on the table. But that is not the stuff that they have been brought up on. That is not what the British Empire has been nourished on. Britain has never shown at its best except when it was confronted with a real danger and understood it.

Let us for a moment look at the worst. The Rumanian blunder was an unfortunate one. But, at worst, it prolongs the War; it does not alter the fundamental facts of the War. I cannot help hoping that it may even have a salutary effect in calling the attention of the Allies to obvious defects in their organisation, not merely the organisation of each, but the organisation of the whole, and if it does

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that and braces them up to fresh effort, it may prove, bad as it is, a blessing. That is the worst. That has been a real set-back. It is the one cloud—well, it is the darkest cloud—and it is a cloud that appeared on a clearing horizon. We are doing our best to make it impossible that that disaster shall lead to worse. That is why we have taken in the last few days very strong action in Greece. We mean to take no risks there. We have decided to take definite and decisive action, and I think it has succeeded. We have decided also to recognise the agents of that great Greek statesman, M. Venizelos.

I wanted to clear out of the way what I regarded as the worst features in the military situation, but I should like to say one word about the lesson of the fighting on the Western front, not about the military strategy, but about the significance of the whole of that great struggle, one of the greatest struggles ever waged in the history of the world. It is full of encouragement and of hope. Just look at it. An absolutely new Army! The old had done its duty, and spent itself in the achievement of that great task. This is a new Army. But a year ago it was ore in the earth of Britain, yea, and of Ireland. It became iron. It has passed through a fiery furnace, and the enemy knows that it is now fine steel—an absolutely new Army, new men, new officers, taken from schools. Boys from schools, from colleges, from counting-houses, never trained to war, never thought of war, many of them, perhaps, never handled a weapon of war; generals never given the opportunity of handling great masses of men! Some of us had seen the manœuvres. What would now be regarded as a Division attacking a small village is more than our generals ever had the opportunity of handling before the War. Compared with the great manœuvres on the Continent, they were toy

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manceuvres. And yet this new Army, new men, new officers, generals new to this kind of work, they have faced the greatest army in the world, the greatest army the world has ever seen, the best equipped and the best trained, and they have beaten them, beaten them, beaten them ! Battle after battle, day after day, week after week ! From the strongest entrenchments ever devised by human skill, they have driven them out by valour, by valour which is incredible when you read the story of it.

There is something which gives us hope, which fills us with pride in the nation to which they belong. It is a fact, and it is a fact full of significance for us—and for the foe. It is part of his reckoning as well. He has seen that Army grow and proved under his very eyes. A great French general said to me : “Your Army is a new Army. It must learn, not merely generals, not merely officers, but the men must learn, not merely what to do, but how and when to do it.” They are becoming veterans, and therefore, basing our confidence upon these facts, I am as convinced as I ever was of ultimate victory if the nation proves as steady, as valorous, as ready to sacrifice, and as ready to learn and to endure as that great Army of our sons in France. That is all I shall say at the present moment about the military situation.

I should like now to say a word or two about the Government itself, and in doing so I am anxious to avoid all issues that excite irritation or controversy or disunion. This is not a time for that, but it must not be assumed if I do so that I accept as complete the accounts which have been given of the way in which the Government was formed. My attitude towards the policy of the late Administration of which I was a member, and for all whose deeds I am just as responsible as

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any one of them, has been given in letters and memoranda, and my reasons for leaving have also been given in a letter. If it were necessary, I should have, on personal grounds, welcomed its publication, but I am convinced that controversies as to the past will not help us as to the future, and therefore, as far as I am concerned, I place them on one side and go on with what I regard as the business of the Government under these trying conditions. I should like to say something first of all as to the unusual character and composition of the Government as an executive body.

The House has realised that there has been a separation between the functions of the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House. That was because we came to the conclusion that it was more than any one man, whatever his energy or physical strength might be, could do to undertake both functions in the middle of a great war. The task of the Leader of the House is a very anxious and absorbing task, even in war. I have not been able to attend the House very much myself during the last two or three years. But I have been here often enough to realise that the task of the Leader of the House of Commons is not a sinecure even in a war—friends of mine took care that it should not be so. So much for that point. Now there are three characteristics in the present Administration in which it may be said it has departed perhaps from precedent. First of all, there is the concentration of the Executive in a very few hands. The second is the choosing of men of administrative and business capacity rather than men of Parliamentary experience, where we were unable to obtain both for the headship of a great Department, and the third is a franker and fuller recognition of the partnership of Labour in the

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Government of this country. No Government that has ever been formed to rule this country has had such a share—such a number of men who all their lives have been associated with labour and with the labour organisations of this country. We realise that it is impossible to conduct war without getting the complete and unqualified support of labour, and we were anxious to obtain their assistance and their counsel for the purpose of the conduct of the War.

The fact that this is a different kind of organisation to any that preceded it is not a criticism upon its predecessors—not necessarily. They were peace structures. They were organised for a different purpose and a different condition of things. The kind of craft you have for river or canal traffic is not exactly the kind of vessel you construct for the high seas. I have no doubt that the old Cabinets—I am not referring to the last Cabinet—I am referring to the old system of Cabinets, where the heads of every Department were represented inside the Cabinet—I have no doubt that the old Cabinets were better adapted to navigate the Parliamentary river with its shoals and shifting sands, and perhaps for a cruise in home waters. But a Cabinet of twenty-three is rather top-heavy for a gale. I do not say that this particular craft is best adapted for Parliamentary navigation, but I am convinced it is the best for the War, in which you want quick decision above everything. Look at the last two-and-a-half years. I am not referring to what has happened in this country. When I say these things I would rather the House of Commons looked at the War as a whole and took the concerns of the Allies as a whole, and we are all perfectly certain, and I shall have the assent of my right hon. friend in this, that the Allies have suffered disaster after disaster through tardiness of decision and action, very largely for reasons I shall give later

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on. I know in this I am in complete agreement with my right hon. friend. It is true that in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom. That was written for Oriental countries in peace times. You cannot run a war with a Sanhedrin. That is the meaning of the Cabinet of five, with one of its members doing sentry duty outside, manning the walls and defending the Council Chamber against attack while we are trying to do our work inside.

Some concern has been expressed at the relations of this small executive to other members. It has been suggested that there is danger of lack of co-ordination and common direction ; it has been wondered how we can ever meet : one very respectable newspaper suggests there ought to be weekly dinners to discuss matters of common concern. What is the difficulty ? Whenever anything concerns a particular Department you follow precedent. This is not the first time you have had heads of Departments outside the Cabinet. As a matter of fact, the practice of putting every head of a Department inside the Cabinet is quite a modern innovation, and the way in which Governments have been in the habit of dealing with that situation is that whenever there is anything that concerns a particular Department the head of that Department, with his officers, attends the executive committee, and you immediately get into contact with each other and discuss those problems which require solution. That is an old practice. I think it is a very effective practice. It is very much better, especially in time of war, than keeping men away from their Departments discussing things which do not directly concern them. But while undoubtedly their counsel may be very valuable, when you have a considerable number of people brought together you are apt to create confusion and thus to delay decision. There is another point of departure and

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another change, and that is the amalgamation of the old War Committee with the Cabinet. The old War Committee had what the Cabinet had not—it had secretaries to keep a complete record of all decisions, and this no Cabinet has ever had. They were always a question of memory. That is the real difference between the War Committee and the Cabinet. In the War Committee a full record was taken of every decision, and the minutes were sent round to each member for correction. The matters dealt with there were just as confidential—I might even say more confidential—than the vast majority of questions decided in the Cabinet. Henceforth there will be no distinction between your War Committee and your War Cabinet. The secretary will always be there. We propose to strengthen his staff, so that we might have more direct means of communication and a more organised means of communication between the Cabinet and various Departments than you have ever had in the past. I come now to the other point which has caused some misgiving. There seems to be a little concern lest the new organisation should have the effect of lessening Parliamentary control. I wonder why on earth it should do that. Each Minister answers for his Department exactly in the same way as under the old system. Each Minister is accountable for his Department to Parliament, and the Government as a whole are accountable to Parliament. The control of Parliament as a whole must, and always must, be supreme because it represents the nation. There is not the slightest attempt here to derogate in any particular from the complete control of Parliament. I do not think the present methods of Parliamentary control are efficient, but that is not a change which has come about with the new Administration. I have always thought that the methods of Parliamentary control—and I speak here as a fairly old Parliamentarian—

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rather tended to give undue prominence to trivialities—my right hon. friend and I have talked over this matter many a time—and on the other hand it rather tended to minimise and ignore realities. Whether you can improve upon that I personally have never had any doubt, but I have always thought—I do not know whether I carry any one with me on this except my hon. friend who sits there—that the French system was a more effective one—the system whereby Ministers have to appear before Parliamentary Committees, where questions can be asked them, and where they can give an answer which they would not care to give in public. I think that in many respects that system has helped to save France from one or two very serious blunders. I am not committing the Government to that beyond this, that we are investigating that question. It is just possible we might refer the matter to Parliament to settle for itself, because it is not so much a question for the Government as a question for Parliament itself to decide, subject, of course, to any criticism or suggestion which the Government might wish to make, as to the best and most efficient methods during a period of war of exercising Parliamentary control over the Departments. Now I come to the work of the Government which the Government is cutting out for itself. I had hoped to be able to tell the House of Commons a good deal more upon three or four very vital matters than I am in a position to do, owing to reasons over which I have no control. I have not been able to confer with heads of Departments, nor with my friends in the Cabinet, and there are two or three questions upon which I should have liked to pronounce decisions to-day, but I am not in a position, unfortunately, to do so. My right hon. friends yesterday—the Home Secretary (Sir George Cave) in introducing a Bill and the Leader of the House sub-

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sequently—gave a very detailed account of the probable working of the new Ministries, and therefore I shall have very little to say with regard to these. Take the Ministry of Labour. It has been urged for thirty years by organised Labour in this country, and my experience in the Ministry of Munitions has taught me this, that it was desirable there should be a Department which was not altogether in the position of employer to employed, to those who were concerned whenever there was a dispute about labour conditions or wages, but I hope that this Department will not confine itself merely to the settling of disputes. That is but a small part of the whole industrial problem which I hope this Ministry will assist in solving. I hope it will become in a real sense a Ministry with the well-being of labour in its charge. In the Munitions Department I had the privilege of setting up something that was known as the Welfare Department, which was an attempt to take advantage of the present malleability of industry in order to impress upon it more humanitarian conditions, to make labour less squalid and less repellent, and more attractive and more healthy. A number of very able volunteers are organising that Department, and I am glad to be able to say about some of them that they belong to the Society of Friends, and have had a rooted objection to war, which is due to the creed they profess—no one has doubted their sincerity—but they have never carried it so far as to say that during a war they should take no part in any national burden, and they are working hard in this Department. Then I am hoping that this Department will take a leading part in assisting in the mobilisation of labour for the purposes of the War, a matter to which I shall refer later on. I think my right hon. friend has already indicated to the House what we propose to do with regard to shipping. It was never so vital to the life of the nation

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as it is at the present moment during the War. It is the jugular vein which if severed would destroy the life of the nation, and the Government felt the time had come for taking over more complete control of all the ships of this country and placing them in practically the same position as are the railways of the country at the present moment, so that during the War shipping will be nationalised in the real sense of the term. The prodigious profits which were made out of freights were contributing in no small measure to the high cost of commodities, and I always found not only that, but that they were making it difficult for us in our task with labour. Whenever I met organised labour, under any conditions, where I would persuade them to give up privileges, I always had hurled at me phrases about the undue and extravagant profits of shipping. This is intolerable in war time, when so many are making so great sacrifices for the State. Sir Joseph Maclay, one of the ablest shipowners in the United Kingdom, has undertaken to direct this great enterprise with one sole object—the service of the country. He is now conferring with the Admiralty and the very able Shipping Control Committee, over which Lord Curzon presided, and I hope I shall be in a position to inform the House of the plans and projects he recommends should be taken, not merely for the more effective nationalisation of the ships which we have already on the register, but the speedy construction of more, so as to make up the wastage which I fear is inevitable in any great war, especially when you are dealing with such piratical methods as those which have characterised the maritime policy of the German Empire. With regard to mines, here the Government also feel, as the late Government did, that they are dealing with an essential commodity, which is the very life of industry. It is an essential ingredient to our mili-

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lary and industrial efficiency, and we ought to assume more direct control over, not merely one coalfield, but over the whole industry. The conditions are being carefully considered and will be stated to the House of Commons, but I am not sure whether we can place our plans before it before we separate. Now, I feel I must say something about the food problem. It is undoubtedly serious and will be grave unless not merely the Government, but the nation is prepared to grapple with it courageously without loss of time. The main facts are fairly well known. The available harvests of the world have failed. Take Canada and the United States of America. As compared with last year, the harvests were hundreds of millions of bushels down, and that means that the surplus available for sale abroad is diminished to an extent which is disastrous. In times of peace we can always make up the deficiency in any particular country by resorting to another. If America failed there was Russia or the Argentine—but the Argentine promises badly—and Australia. Russia is not available; Australia means almost prohibitive transport. When we come to our own harvest, which is not a mean ingredient in the whole, not merely was the harvest a poor one, but, what is still more serious, during the time when the winter wheat ought to have been sown the weather was almost prohibitive, if not altogether, and I do not believe more than three-eighths of the usual sowing has taken place. Let us clearly understand what it means. Let us get to the bottom of this. Unless the nation knows what it means you cannot ask them to do their duty. It is true that to a certain extent you can make up by the spring sowing, but, as any agriculturist knows, that never produces anything comparable to the winter sowing.

Those are the main features so far as the harvest is

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concerned. We have always got the submarine menace, which in this respect is not the most important one to consider. Under these conditions it was decided by the late Government to appoint a Food Controller, and we have actually appointed him—an able, experienced administrator, especially in these matters, and a man of great determination and force of character. He is assisted by the ablest experts in this House. We always know the quality of a man by opposing him for years, and my hon. friend (Captain Bathurst) many a time found it to be his duty to make himself very active on Bills which I had the burden of carrying through this House, so that I know something about his qualities. At the head of the Board of Agriculture we have a man who is singularly gifted, and who has as thorough a knowledge of the principles and the practices of this question as any man in this or any other country. I felt it important that we should secure the very best brains in the country to bear upon this very difficult and very dangerous problem. The problem is a double one—it is one of distribution and of production. In respect of both we must call upon the people of this country to make real sacrifices, but it is essential when we do so that the sacrifices should be equal. Over-consumption by the affluent must not be allowed to create a shortage for the less well-to-do. I am sure we can depend upon men and women of all conditions—to use an ordinary phrase which I am sure the House will allow me to use because it is thoroughly well understood—I hope we can appeal to men and women of all ranks and conditions to play the game. Any sort of concealment hurts the nation. It hurts it when it is fighting for its life. Therefore we must appeal to the nation as a whole, men and women—without the help of the whole nation we can accomplish nothing—to assist us to so distribute our resources that there shall be no man, woman, or

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child who will be suffering from hunger because someone else has been getting too much.

When you come to production, every available square yard must be made to produce food. The labour available for tillage should not be turned to more ornamental purposes until the food necessities of the country have been adequately safeguarded. The best use must be made of land and of labour to increase the food supplies of this country—corn, potatoes, and all kinds of food products. All those who have the opportunity must feel it is their duty to the State to assist in producing and in contributing to the common stock upon which everybody can draw. If they do this, we shall get food without any privation, without any want, everybody having plenty of the best and healthiest food. By that means, and that means alone, will the nation be able to carry through the War to that triumphal issue to which we are all looking forward. It means sacrifice. But what sacrifice? Talk to a man who has returned from the horrors of the Somme or who has been through the haunting wretchedness of a winter campaign, and you will know something of what those gallant men are enduring for their country. They are enduring much, they are hazarding all, whilst we are living in comfort and security at home. You cannot have absolute equality of sacrifice. In a war that is impossible. But you can have equal readiness to sacrifice from all. There are hundreds of thousands who have given their lives, there are millions who have given up comfortable homes and exchanged them for a daily communion with death. Multitudes have given up those whom they love best. Let the nation as a whole place its comforts, its luxuries, its indulgences, its elegances, on a national altar, consecrated by such sacrifices as these men have made. Let us proclaim during the War a National

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Lent. The nation will be better and stronger for it, mentally and morally as well as physically. It will strengthen its fibre, it will ennoble its spirit. Without it we shall not get the full benefit of this struggle. Our Armies might drive the enemy out of the battered villages of France, across the devastated plains of Belgium. They might hurl them across the Rhine in battered disarray. But unless the nation as a whole shoulders part of the burden of victory it will not profit by the triumph, for it is not what a nation gains, it is what a nation gives that makes it great.

While the nation is making such enormous sacrifices as those I have already pointed out, it is intolerable that any section should be permitted to make exceptional profits out of those sacrifices, and by that means actually increase the burdens borne by others. A good deal has already been done by the late Administration to arrest unfair private profiteering out of the War. The Government have come to the conclusion that they cannot ask the nation for more sacrifices without even more drastic steps yet being taken. There are several ways of dealing with this problem. One is the annexation of all war profits. Another is the cutting down of prices so as to make excessive profits impossible. The Munitions Act adopted both of those expedients. Eighty per cent. of the profits in controlled firms were annexed. In addition to that, there has been a most searching and minute revision of prices in the controlled firms, and enormous reductions have already been achieved in those firms. The problem is now being carefully examined by my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and others, and we hope to be able to make an announcement shortly as to the course the Government intend to adopt. It is quite clear that if the nation must be asked to make further sacrifices in order to win the

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War the road should be cleared by action of this kind.

I now come to an even more difficult subject—one which is equally vital to the success of this country in this great War. I have hitherto talked largely of the mobilisation of the material resources of the nation. I now come to the mobilisation of the labour reserves of the country, which are even more vital to our success than the former. Without this—let us make no mistake—we shall not be able to pull through. It is not the mere haphazard law of supply and demand that will accomplish that which is necessary to save the nation within the time that it is essential it should be accomplished. It is not a question of years. It is a question of months, perhaps of weeks. And unless not merely the material resources of the country, but the labour of the country is used to the best advantage, and every man is called upon to render such service to the State as he can best give, victory is beyond our reach. The problem with which we are confronted is a difficult one. Nearly a year ago we decided that in order to maintain our Armies in the field the nation must have complete control over all its military resources in men. But it is impossible to take men into the Army without taking them from civil employment of greater or less utility, and it has been our object—an object that becomes more and more plain as time goes on; it was plain to the late Administration as well as to ourselves—to establish such a system of recruiting as will ensure that no man is taken into the Army who is capable of rendering more useful service in industry. To complete our plan for the organisation of all the national resources, we ought to have power to say that every man who is not taken into the Army, whatever his position or rank, really is employed

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on work of national importance. For instance, I was constantly appealed to as Secretary of State for War to release men for agricultural work. The Army Council and those in charge were quite prepared to do so, but there was absolutely no guarantee that, if the men were released, they would be used for agricultural purposes—not the least. The moment they were released from the Army they were free to go to munition work, or to any other work where they thought they could sell their labour to the best advantage, or where they thought they could live under the most pleasant conditions.

We could not ensure that these men if released would be used for agricultural purposes, and we were constantly confronted with these difficulties. That is one of the problems with which you must deal if the nation is to have the full benefit of such labour reserves as are still left to it. At present it is only the man who is fitted for military service, and has not established a claim for exemption, on whom the nation can call. The unfit man and the exempted man are surely under the same moral obligation. But still there is no means of enforcing it. It is with this imperfect organisation of our industrial manpower that we are called upon to confront an enemy who not only exercises to the full his undoubted right over his own population, but has introduced the practice hitherto unknown to civilised warfare of removing the civilian inhabitants of occupied territory to make good the shortage of labour in his own factories. It is necessary that we should make a swift and effective answer to Germany's latest move. As our Armies grow, our needs for munitions grow. There is a large part of our labour for munition purposes which is immobile. There may be a surplus in one factory and a shortage in another. We have no power to transfer men. As the months go by the cost of the War increases.

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Our purchases in neutral countries become more difficult to finance, yet there may be and there are thousands of men occupied in industries which consume our wealth at home, and do nothing to strengthen our credit abroad. Yet we have no power to transfer them from employment where they are wasting our strength and their own to employments where they could increase it. We have not even the organisation necessary for utilising them as volunteers.

These are the powers which we must take, and this is the organisation which we must complete. I could dwell upon it by the illustration of agriculture. There is undoubtedly in this country a considerable number of people skilled in tillage of the soil who are not producing food, but we cannot mobilise them. We cannot direct them. I believe that there are scores, if not hundreds of thousands, of people of that kind—there is no question here of military age—who if we could utilise them to the best advantage could produce great quantities of food in this country. But we cannot do it. Not only that. The difficulty in agriculture is the want of skilled men. You may have two or three skilled men on a particular farm, or the farmers may have no skilled men at all, yet two or three skilled men, if you could treat them as commissioned officers, could look after not merely one farm, but several farms, with the aid of unskilled men or women working under them. I cannot in the course of a speech like this give the whole details of the plans of my right hon. friends here, with regard to agriculture, but I can give an assurance that there are schemes of very great magnitude which have been formulated, and which are in course of being put into operation. They will involve great local organisation throughout the country. The matter was considered by the War Committee of the late Government, and it was unanimously decided

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by them that the time had come for the adoption of the principle of universal national service. It was one of the first matters taken up by the present Government, and the War Cabinet have unanimously adopted the conclusions come to by the preceding War Cabinet. I believe that the plans which we have made will secure to every worker all that he has the right to ask for.

In order to do this it is proposed to appoint at once a Director of National Service to be in charge of both the military and the civil side of universal national service. The civil and military sides of the directory are to be entirely separate, and there will be a military and a civil director responsible to the Director of National Service. The military director will be responsible for recruiting for the Army, and will hand over to the War Office the recruits obtained. Here I need not elaborate, because it is not proposed to make any change in recruiting for military service. As regards civilian service, it is proposed that the Director of National Service shall proceed by the scheduling of industries and of services according to their essential character during the War. Certain industries are regarded as indispensable, and the Departments concerned will indent upon the Director of National Service for the labour which they require for those services, and other services will be rationed in such matters as labour, raw material, and power. Labour that is set free from non-essential and rationed industries will be available to set free potential soldiers who are at present exempted from military service, and to increase the available supply of labour for essential services. This labour will be invited to enrol at once and be registered as war workers on lines analogous to the existing munitions volunteers, with similar provisions as to rates of pay and separation allowance.

I have no doubt that when it is realised how essential

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to the life of the nation it is that the services of every man should be put to the best use we shall secure an adequate supply of these volunteers. We are taking immediate steps to secure by this means the men we want. We shall begin as soon as may be to classify industries and invite the enrolment of volunteers. If it is found impossible to get the numbers we require—and I hope it will be possible—we shall not hesitate to come to Parliament and ask Parliament to release us from pledges given in other circumstances, and to obtain the necessary power for rendering our plans fully effective. The nation is fighting for its life, and it is entitled to the best services of all its sons. We have been fortunate in inducing the Lord Mayor of Birmingham (Mr. Neville Chamberlain) to accept the position of Director-General under this scheme. It was with very great difficulty that we induced him to undertake this very onerous duty, as the task with which he is identified in Birmingham is a matter of first-class importance to that great city, and it was only the urgent appeals made to him that induced him to undertake this great and onerous task. He will immediately proceed to organise this great new system of enrolment for industrial purposes, and I hope that before Parliament resumes its duties in another few weeks we shall be able to report that we have secured a sufficiently large industrial army in order to mobilise the whole of the labour strength of this country for war purposes.

I wish it had been possible for me to have said something to-day about Ireland. I had hoped to be able to do so, but the circumstances to which I have already referred have made it impossible for me to devote my time and attention to the problems which have arisen in that country. I have had one or two preliminary interviews with my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary, and I

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have made arrangements for others on certain questions, but unfortunately I have not been able to attend to this and to many other equally insistent matters in the last few days. All I should like to say is this : I wish it were possible to remove the misunderstanding between Britain and Ireland which has for centuries been such a source of misery to the one and of embarrassment and weakness to the other. Apart from the general interest which I have taken in it, I should consider that a War measure of the first importance. I should consider it a great victory for the Allied Forces, something that would give strength to the armies of the Allies. I am convinced now that it is a misunderstanding—partly racial and partly religious. It is to the interest of both to have this misunderstanding removed ; but there seems to have been some evil chance that frustrated every effort made for the achievement of better relations. I wish that that misunderstanding could be removed. I tried once. I did not succeed.

The fault was not entirely on one side. I felt the whole time that we were moving in an atmosphere of nervous suspicion and distrust—pervasive, universal of everything and everybody. I was drenched with suspicion of Irishmen by Englishmen and of Englishmen by Irishmen, and, worst and most fatal of all, suspicion by Irishmen of Irishmen. It was a quagmire of distrust which clogged the footsteps and made progress impossible. That is the real enemy of Ireland. If that could be slain I believe that it would accomplish an act of reconciliation that would make Ireland greater and Britain greater, and would make the United Kingdom and the Empire greater than they ever were before. That is why I have always thought and said that the real solution of the Irish problem is largely one of the better atmosphere. I am speaking not merely for myself, but for my colleagues

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when I say that we shall strive to produce that better feeling.

We shall strive by every means and by many hazards to produce that atmosphere, and we ask men of all races and men of all creeds and faith to help us, not to solve a political question, but to help us to do something that will be a real contribution to the winning of the War.

The achievements of the Navy speak for themselves. I do not think that anything I can say would be in the least adequate to recognise the enormous and incalculable services that the great Navy of Britain has rendered, not merely to the Empire, but to the whole Allied cause. Not merely would victory have been impossible, but the War could not have been kept on for two and a-half years had it not been for the services of the Navy. Now I come to the question of the Dominions. Ministers have repeatedly acknowledged the splendid assistance which the Dominions have given of their own free will to the old country in its championship of the cause of humanity. The great ideals of national fair play and justice appeal to the Dominions just as insistently as to us. They have recognised throughout that our fight is not a selfish one, that it is not merely a European quarrel, but that there are great world issues involved which their children are as concerned in as our children. The new Administration are as full of gratitude as the old for the superb valour which our kinsmen have shown in so many stricken fields. But that is not why I introduce the subject now. I introduce the subject now because I want to say that we feel the time has come when the Dominions ought to be more formally consulted as to the progress and course of the War, as to the steps that ought to be taken to secure victory, and as to the best methods of garnering

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in the fruits of their efforts as well as of our own. We propose, therefore, at an early date to summon an Imperial Conference, to place the whole position before the Dominions, and to take counsel with them as to what further action they and we can take together in order to achieve an early and complete triumph for the ideals they and we have so superbly fought for.

As to our relations with the Allies—and this is the last topic I shall refer to—I ventured to say earlier in the year that there were two things we ought to seek as Allies—the first was unity of aim and the other unity of action. The first we have achieved. Never have Allies worked in better harmony or more perfect accord than the Allies in this great struggle. There has been no friction and there has been no misunderstanding. But when I come to the question of unity of action, I still think that there is a good deal left to be desired. I have only got to refer to the incident of Rumania, and each man can spell out for himself what I mean. The enemy have got two advantages—two supreme advantages. One is that they act on an internal line, and the other is that there is one great dominant power that practically directs the forces of all. We have neither of these advantages. We must therefore achieve the same end by other means. The advantages we possess are advantages which time improves. No one can say that we have made the best of that time. There has been a tardiness of decision and action. I forget who said about Necker that he was like a clock that was always too slow. There is a little of that in the great Alliance clock—Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania.

Before we can take full advantage of the enormous resources at the command of the Allies there must be some means of arriving at quicker and readier

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decisions, and of carrying them out. I believe that that can be done, and if we quicken our action, as well as our decisions, it will equalise the conditions more than we have succeeded in doing in the past. There must be more consultation, more real consultation, between the men who matter in the direction of affairs. There must be less of the feeling that each country has got its own front to look after. They have carried it so far that almost each Department might have a front of its own. The policy of a common front must be a reality. It is on the other side. Austrian guns are helping German infantry, and German infantry are stiffening Austrian arms. The Turks are helping Germans and Austrians, and Bulgarians mix with all. There is an essential feeling that there is but one front, and I believe we have got to get that more and more, instead of having overwhelming guns on one side, and bare breasts, gallant breasts, on the other. It is essential for the Allies, not merely to realise that, but to carry it out in policy and action. I take this opportunity at the beginning of this new Administration of emphasising that point, because I believe it is the one essential for great victory, and for the curtailment of the period before victory arrives.

I end with one personal note, for which I hope the House will forgive me. May I say, and I say it in all sincerity, that it is one of the deepest regrets of my life that I should part from the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Asquith). Some of his friends know how I strove to avert it. For years I served under the right hon. gentleman, and I am proud to say so. I never had a kinder or more indulgent chief. If there were any faults of temper, they were entirely mine, and I have no doubt I must have been difficult at times. No man had greater admiration for his brilliant intellectual

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attainments, and no man was happier to serve under him. For eight years we differed as men of such different temperaments must necessarily differ, but we never had a personal quarrel, in spite of serious differences in policy, and it was with deep, genuine grief that I felt it necessary to tender my resignation to my right hon. friend. But there are moments when personal and party considerations must sink into absolute insignificance, and if in this War I have given scant heed to the call of party, and so I have—although I have been as strong a party man as any in this House—if I have not done that during this War it is because I realised from the moment the Prussian cannon hurled death at a peaceable and inoffensive little country, that a challenge had been sent to civilisation to decide an issue higher than party, deeper than party, wider than all parties, an issue upon the settlement of which will depend the fate of men in this world for generations when existing parties will have fallen like dead leaves on the highway. Those issues are the issues that I want to keep in front of the nation, so that we shall not falter or faint in our resolve. There is a time in every prolonged and fierce war in the passion and rage of conflict when men forget the high purpose with which they entered it. This is a struggle for international right, international honour, international good faith—the channel along which peace, honour, and good will must flow amongst men. The embankment laboriously built up by generations of men against barbarism has been broken, and, had not the might of Britain passed into the breach, Europe would have been inundated with a flood of savagery and unbridled lust of power. The plain sense of fairplay amongst nations, the growth of an international conscience, the protection of the weak against the strong by the stronger, the

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consciousness that justice has a more powerful backing in this world than greed, the knowledge that any outrage upon fair dealing between nations, great or small, will meet with prompt and meritable chastisement—these constitute the causeway along which humanity was progressing slowly to higher things. The triumph of Prussia would sweep it all away, and leave mankind to struggle helpless in the morass. That is why since this War began I have known but one political aim. For that I have fought with a single eye. That is, the rescue of mankind from the most overwhelming catastrophe that has ever yet menaced its well-being.

Rt. Hon. A. J. BALFOUR

(First Lord of the Admiralty)

At the London Opera House, Aug. 4, 1915

ON this anniversary, memorable, I venture to think, for all time, we are met together to look backwards on the past year and forward as far as we may into the years which are to come. Lord Crewe, in his admirable opening address, gave us a brief survey of Prussian modes of thought, and has shown how the piercing and critical eye of Madame de Stael foresaw, more than a hundred years ago, some of the great forces which were to mould the future. I shall attempt to-night no such historical survey. I shall confine myself in the observations I have to make to you to the crowded months that have filled the year which has just drawn to its close, and some observations, some morals, may, I think, be drawn from the past. There are some commonplaces which it is only just worth while to repeat and certainly not worth while to dwell upon.

I do not need to impress either upon you or upon any who may read what passes in this great hall to-night that the resolve of this nation to pursue this great controversy to the end is not only unshaken, but is stronger now than it was before. I do not require to tell you, I shall not labour to tell you, that not only is our resolve unshaken, but our confidence in the

ultimate result is even more sure than it was in the earlier days of this titanic controversy. Rather would I insist upon some aspects of this controversy which I think have not been quite fully appreciated either in this country and still more in countries hostile, neutral, friendly, or allied, as the case may be.

Why, then, I ask, do I feel so confident about the issue of this struggle? In the first place, if I had been speaking to such an audience as this twelve months ago, what could I have expressed except hopes that the German calculations, notorious throughout the world, were, nevertheless, mistaken? What could I have said to you except that organisation is not everything; that truth and justice still mean something; that the most elaborate system of manufacturing confidence, of manufacturing falsehoods, the manufacturing of great armies admirably equipped—these arts, great as they are, do not necessarily rule the world—and that I had a firm belief in the eternal trend in the directions of justice, of righteousness, and of ultimate peace? That is all I could have said a year ago.

But what can we say now? We can say with confidence that with all their painstaking ability—and there has never been ability more painstaking than that of our enemy—there has been no miscalculation in the War they have not made, except as to the value of munitions and great guns. There they were right more than their opponents. Were they right in anything else? Were they right in their diplomacy? Were they right in their calculation of the force that would be opposed to them? Were they right in their calculations of the results of their first month's struggle? Everything was based, remember, on the immediate knock-out blow they were prepared to deal against a relatively unequipped force of an unprepared enemy.

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I do not say the calculation was a stupid calculation. I do not say that, with a little variation and in certain circumstances, it might not have been accomplished. All I say is it was not accomplished. It was not nearly accomplished. On the West front, as on the East front, all the carefully-prepared plans, all the prophesies so elaborately worked out by the German General Staff, have one and all completely failed, and without a doubt we may all say this with an absolute conviction of its truth—those who now in protestations, perjured and profaned, assure an incredulous world that they never meant to go to war, had they foreseen how the war would go, would have confined themselves to possessing a more complete control over events than they now seem to think was possible, and not a man would have been moved, not a single soldier would have been mobilised, not a life would have been lost between the Ural Mountains and the Bay of Biscay. Unfortunately for them, and unfortunately also for the world, they did not foresee. They wholly miscalculated, and they have plunged us and civilisation into a war which for its character, for the utter destruction of life and property which it has already produced, and which before it closes it will yet produce, has no parallel in the annals of mankind. That is my first ground of confidence. An enemy which has miscalculated for a year may perhaps miscalculate until the end of the War.

What is my second ground of confidence? It is in the Allies. Notoriously a war carried on by separate States and by different Governments, widely divided by seas and continents, is a war which is carried on under some inherent and inevitable difficulties. The only thing that can overcome those difficulties is mutual confidence, mutual trust, mutual belief, and all those

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things we and all our Allies possess in unmeasured degree. Each one of us knows that he cannot be true to himself unless he is true also to the others. Each one of us knows that not only the fortunes of the world, but the fortunes of his own separate and particular State are bound up, irretrievably and irremediably bound up, with the success of the other. Each one of us knows that that feeling is shared by the others, and each of us admires the gallantry, the self-devotion, and bravery with which the other is carrying on his part in this great common adventure.

I do not think it necessary to speak at large upon those who are waging with us this great contest. Serbia, whose gallantry will remain on the historic page as almost a unique instance of what a small nation can do against overwhelming odds; Italy, the latest of our Allies; Belgium, whose pathetic fate and whose indomitable heroism have illumined the tragedy of this war; France, whose feats of arms at this moment have moved to praise and astonishment even those who knew France best, and who hoped most from her.

And of all the German miscalculations, was there a worse one than this? Did they not suppose that in the unhappy war of 1870 they had dealt the blow to the enemy which would chill that military enthusiasm which has carried the French to so many glorious victories in the past? Did they not suppose that that *élan* of the French soldier would be somewhat dimmed, somewhat checked, by the memory of defeats of which present generations have not lost personal memory? They did think so, but they were completely wrong in that as in so many other things. Never in its greatest and most glorious days has the French Army shown more of its great qualities of heroism and dash, and of power to attack and of the power when necessary of resistance of attack than it has

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shown in the last twelve months. And though the part played by Japan in this War has in its most striking aspect come to an end with the completion of the task which the Japanese had set themselves in the Far East, they also have shown in this War, as they have shown on other occasions, how great is their power of self-devoted patriotism, and what they had it in their power to do when the occasion presented itself.

And Russia? What shall I say of Russia? I know no spectacle more moving to a generous spirit than that presented by this contest between men and munitions now going on in the East of Europe. Was there ever heroism greater than that which has been shown by the Russian soldier, power of resistance more splendid, power of attack more brilliant? Shall we look forward with anything but absolute and supreme confidence to the time when the artificial military inequalities between Russia and her Western neighbour are smoothed away, when the Russian soldier will meet the German soldier on equal terms as regards armaments? Do we not know that, when that day of retribution comes, all that Russia has suffered, and is suffering now, will be repaid by her final and overwhelming triumph?

What, then, about ourselves? Have we played our part? Are we playing our part in this world tragedy? I have no hesitation myself in the answer which I propose to give. I look back for a few hours more than the twelve months which have just come to a close. At that moment it seemed to hang—it perhaps did hang—in the balance, whether this country should join those with whom she was bound, not by Treaty, but by friendship, in supporting the common rights of humanity. It hung in the balance, or it seemed to hang in the balance, and the world watched

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and doubted and feared. But the decision was come to—the right decision. And, in my opinion, you might search the records of history in vain to find a more critical decision taken by any governors of men, so far as the future of humanity was concerned. It was a critical moment in civilisation, and the decision taken by the Government of this country at that time, in my judgment, saved civilisation.

How, you may ask me, could the decision taken by a Government at that time who could send at the most no more than 100,000 or 150,000 or 160,000 men to the Continent; how could that decision make a difference when the embattled Armies of the world are counted by millions? Do not think only in terms of army corps. I think you could show—I am sure you could show—that if Great Britain had not then joined in the great struggle, all anticipations of Germany—in Germany's most sanguine mood—would have been accomplished and more than accomplished.

Why do I say that? Picture to yourself if you will what the condition of Western Europe and the Mediterranean would have been if the German Fleet had ridden triumphant in the North Sea, in the Atlantic, and in the Mediterranean when war broke out and afterwards. I do not believe the struggle would have been possible to our Allies. I wish to set no limits to the power which great and valiant nations will display—the resources which, in times of difficulty and stress, they may suddenly develop; but I ask you only to consider how we should have been situated if France had been cut off from England on the north, from her own colonies on the south, if no oversea trade could have reached her shores, if she could not have brought in the raw materials of her manufacture of munitions. I ask you how Italy would have been situated if, with that immense seaboard which she

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possesses, her territory had lain in the midst of hostile fleets of overwhelming strength. If she also had been cut off from her colonies, if she also had been cut off from all outside trade, how could the War have gone on? Look at it as you will, all possibility of carrying on that War depended for its foundation upon the superiority at sea of the Allied Fleets. The Allied Fleets would not have been superior at sea had we, in an unhappy moment of blindness and folly, kept out of the contest, which we might have pretended to ourselves, with some plausibility, was not an immediate and pressing concern of ours. It would have been fatal in the long run to us, but it would have been fatal immediately and within a few months to those whom we are now proud to call our Allies.

I am not belittling, believe me, in the least any of the great things which have been done, are being done, and anything yet to be done by those with whom we are working, and by whose side we are fighting, when I say the whole basis of the structure of defence absolutely depends on the fact that through these months the Allies had the superiority at sea, and that superiority was secured to them by the British Fleet. It could not be secured in any other way. Have any of you thought, looking back over history, how intolerable would be the fate of the world if the supremacy of the sea was held by a nation which not only had military supremacy on land, but intended to use its power and avowedly used the power for acquiring dominance over the whole globe? It would be a tyranny such as we have not known. The world has been saved from it by the fact that predominance at sea has never been in the same hands as the military predominance which has more than once threatened the world. That is why, when universal history comes

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to be written, it will be recognised that in the development of free institutions, and the civilisation which depends upon free institutions, England has not merely set an example at home by her own political action within her own limits, not only shown an example of what constitutional freedom is in those great Dominions which are the glory and the security and the greatness of the Empire, but has ministered to and protected that freedom and the freedom of all the world by the fact that she possessed, and prevented great military Powers from possessing, that dominance at sea which in their hands would have been, and could have been, only an instrument of international tyranny.

I have dwelt, perhaps you will think that it may even be that I was bound to dwell, upon the greatness of the service done by the British Fleet to the nation to which it belongs, and to many other nations which look to it as their protection. Well, that may be so. But if this were the occasion to deal with the whole of the maritime problems of this country I could dwell yet longer upon this theme, and I should not forget, and I hope you will not forget, the services done to us not by the fighting forces of the Crown, but by that great body of the mercantile marine upon whom we depend for our daily bread. One of the miscalculations of our opponents was that by a system of piracy they would not merely destroy but that they would frighten. They have not destroyed as much as they hoped, and they have not frightened at all. But the fact that they have not frightened is not due to any forbearance on their part; it is due to the inherent spirit of gallantry and endurance which makes our mercantile marine go out upon its daily avocations as indifferent to the chances of life and death as if they belonged to one of the great military services of the country.

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But, connected though I be primarily with the Admiralty, I must say something about that heroic body of men—our soldiers who are upholding British honour in the fields of Flanders and in the Mediterranean. I am told there are some—I do not think there can be many—who take the view that the exertions made by this country, by Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and India fall short of what might have been expected—I do not think there are many who hold this view, for I recollect when we were told, twelve months ago, that we should be doing all that was required of us if we sent a corporal's guard with the British flag to the scene of War, and gave our moral blessing to the enterprise of the Allies.

What has happened? We never professed, and those who valued our assistance knew that we never professed, to be masters of a great standing Army. We said we would send out the 100,000 or 160,000 men to whom I have already referred, and that offer was most gratefully accepted. What has happened? The casualties, the loss by death and wounds of the gallant men who have gone to the front, is, if I am not mistaken, twice the amount of the original force which we promised to send. And that force, I need hardly tell you, has not only not been diminished by these great losses; it is far stronger than ever, and is growing daily in strength. It is a curious figure which I looked into to-day, but it is a fact that the casualties—the losses by death and wounds in the British Army—since the War began are more than twice all the losses by death and wounds suffered by the Germans in the war against France in 1870—more than twice.

I know that what we have done has not fallen short, but has far exceeded what was expected from us, but what we have done is only part of what we are going to do. We have not yet shot our bolt. We have

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not yet been able to put forth our full strength on land. We had to create a new Army ; we have created a new Army ; we are still creating a new Army. Putting aside for the moment all that the Navy has done, ignoring the all-important part it has played, let those who consider only the military aspect of the question wait until the end. Let them weigh what we have done and they will be in a position to judge what we shall do when we promise yet more. We see before us Germany gradually coming within sight—I do not say it is near—but coming within sight of her last resources to keep up her full numbers. We are not yet in sight of our full numbers, and for my own part, as I am confident that the historians will say that this country has played its part and its full part in maritime matters, so they will say that it has not in any sense fallen short of what it could do in military matters, while it has far exceeded anything which any of its critics or any of its friends expected that it would do.

I referred to the greatness of our losses compared with the losses suffered even in very great wars of bygone times, and we know by our personal experience how heavy they are. I doubt whether there be one man or one woman whom I am addressing this evening who has not lost either a near friend or near relation, sometimes many near friends and many near relations, in this colossal struggle. I do not mourn their fate. They died a great death for a great cause, for what I deem the greatest of all causes, the freedom of mankind from alien domination. We should all, every one of us, gladly die in that great cause.

I am not going to indulge in any invective against our opponents. I suppose most of them did what they were told because they were told. A good reason. I suppose that their rulers have deluded themselves into the belief that Germany and the Germans were so

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great, so good, so exceptional that to be dominated by a German was the highest privilege which an inferior race could hope to enjoy in this bad world. But we, who are the immemorial champions of freedom, can take no such view. We know ourselves to be engaged in a great cause. We have made great sacrifices in the past, we look with unflinching eyes to the future; we are prepared to make great sacrifices in the future; we are determined to see this fight to a good end; and our determination is shared in every part of the British Empire, as it is by every one of our Allies.

May I, then, ask you to agree to the resolution which I am about to read? It embodies, I am certain, the inner thought, the inner hopes of every one. It has been read, is perhaps at this moment being read, in every part of the United Kingdom; it is being moved in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand, in South Africa, in India—wherever the British flag[^] flies. Wherever British love of justice is realised and loved, there this resolution is being read; it is the common aspiration of our race; it represents the cause for which we are ready to do everything, and I now beg to put it before you, and Sir Robert Borden will second it, he feeling, as I feel, that in no more forcible or more concise language could we express our hope, our determination, our beliefs, and our ideals than in these words. I therefore beg to move:—

“That on this anniversary of the declaration of a righteous war this meeting of the people of London records its inflexible determination to continue to a victorious end the struggle in the maintenance of those ideals of liberty and justice which are the common and the sacred cause of all the Allies.”

Rt. Hon. A. J. BALFOUR

(First Lord of the Admiralty)

Statement to
American Press Representatives,
May 18, 1916

THE phrase "freedom of the seas" is, naturally, attractive to British and American ears. For the extension of freedom into all departments of life and over the whole world has been one of the chief aspirations of the English-speaking peoples, and efforts towards that end have formed no small part of their contribution to civilisation. But "freedom" is a word of many meanings; and we shall do well to consider in what meaning the Germans use it when they ask for it, not—it may be safely said—because they love Freedom, but because they hate Britain.

About the "freedom of the seas," in one sense, we are all agreed. England and Holland fought for it in times gone by. To their success the United States may be said to owe its very existence. For if, three hundred years ago, the maritime claims of Spain and Portugal had been admitted, whatever else North America might have been it would not have been English-speaking. It neither would have employed the language, nor obeyed the laws, nor enjoyed the institutions which, in the last analysis, are of British origin.

But the "freedom of the seas," desired by the modern German, is a very different thing from the freedom

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for which our forefathers fought in days of old. How, indeed, can it be otherwise? The most simple minded must feel suspicious when they find that these missionaries of maritime freedom are the very same persons who preach and who practise upon the land the extremest doctrines of military absolutism.

Ever since the genius of Bismarck created the German Empire by Prussian rifles, welding the German people into a great unity by military means, on a military basis, German ambitions have been a cause of unrest to the entire world. Commercial and political domination, depending upon a gigantic army autocratically governed, has been, and is, the German ideal.

If, then, Germany wants what she calls the freedom of the seas, it is solely as a means whereby this ideal may receive world-wide extension. The power of Napoleon never extended beyond the coast line of Europe. Further progress was barred by the British fleets and by them alone. Germany is determined to endure no such limitations; and if she cannot defeat her enemies at sea, at least she will paralyse their sea power.

There is a characteristic simplicity in the methods by which she sets about attaining this object. She poses as a reformer of international law, though international law has never bound her for an hour. She objects to "economic pressure" when it is exercised by a fleet, though she sets no limit to the brutal completeness with which economic pressure may be imposed by an army. She sighs over the suffering which war imposes upon peaceful commerce, though her own methods of dealing with peaceful commerce would have wrung the conscience of Captain Kidd. She denounces the maritime methods of the Allies, though in her efforts to defeat them she is deterred neither by the rules of war, the appeal of humanity, nor the rights of neutrals.

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It must be admitted, therefore, that it is not the cause of peace, of progress, or of liberty which preoccupies her when, in the name of Freedom, she urges fundamental changes in maritime practice. Her manifest object is to shatter an obstacle which now stands in her way, as, more than a hundred years ago, it stood in the way of the masterful genius who was her oppressor and is her model.

Not along this path are peace and liberty to be obtained. To paralyse naval power and leave military power uncontrolled is surely the worst injury which international law can inflict upon mankind.

Let me confirm this truth by dwelling for a moment on an aspect of it which is, I think, too often forgotten. It should be observed that even if the German proposal were carried out in its entirety it would do nothing to relieve the world from the burden of armaments.

Fleets would still be indispensable. But their relative value would suffer change. They could no longer be used to exercise pressure upon an enemy except in conjunction with an army. The gainers by the change would, therefore, be the nations who possessed armies—the military monarchies. Interference with trade would be stopped; but oversea invasion would be permitted. The proposed change would, therefore, not merely diminish the importance of sea power, but it would diminish it most in the case of non-military States—like America and Britain.

Suppose, for example, that Germany, in her desire to appropriate some Germanised portions of South America, came into conflict with the United States over the Monroe Doctrine. The United States, bound by the Doctrine of “freedom of the seas,” could aim no blow at her enemy until she herself had created a large army and become, for the time being, a military

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community. Her sea power would be useless or nearly so. Her land power would not exist.

But more than this might happen. Let us suppose the desired change had been effected. Let us suppose that the maritime nations, accepting the new situation, thought themselves relieved from all necessity of protecting their sea-borne commerce, and arranged their programmes of naval ship-building accordingly. For some time it would probably proceed on legal lines. Commerce, even hostile commerce, would be unhampered. But a change might happen. Some unforeseen circumstance might make the German General Staff think it to be to the interest of its nation to cast to the winds the "freedom of the seas" and, in defiance of the new law, to destroy the trade of its enemies.

Could anybody suggest after our experience in this War, after reading German histories and German theories of politics, that Germany would be prevented from taking such a step by the mere fact that it was a breach of international treaties to which she was a party? She would never hesitate—and the only result of the cession by the specific Powers of their maritime rights would be that the military Powers would seize the weapon for their own purpose, and turn it against those who had too hastily abandoned it.

Thus we are forced to the sorrowful recognition of the weakness of international law so long as it is unsupported by international authority.

While this state of things is permitted to endure, drastic changes in international law may well do more harm than good; for if the new rules should involve serious limitations of belligerent Powers, they would be broken as soon as it suited the interests of the aggressor; and his victim would be helpless. Nothing could be more disastrous. It is bad that law should

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be defied. It is far worse that it should injure the well disposed. Yet this is what would inevitably happen, since law, unsupported by authority, will hamper everybody but the criminal.

Here we come face to face with the great problem which lies behind all the changing aspects of this tremendous War. When it is brought to an end, how is civilised mankind so to reorganise itself that similar catastrophes shall not be permitted to recur? The problem is insistent, though its full solution may be beyond our powers at this stage of our development.

But, surely, even now, it is fairly clear that if substantial progress is to be made toward securing the peace of the world and a free development of its constituent nations, the United States of America and the British Empire should explicitly recognise, what all instinctively know, that on these great subjects they share a common ideal.

I am well aware that in even hinting at the possibility of co-operation between these two countries I am treading on delicate ground. The fact that American independence was wrested by force from Great Britain colours the whole view which some Americans take of the "natural" relations between the two communities. Others are impatient of anything which they regard as a sentimental appeal to community of race; holding that, in respect of important sections of the American people, this community of race does not, in fact, exist. Others, again, think that any argument based on a similarity of laws and institutions belittles the greatness of America's contribution to the political development of the modern world.

Rightly understood, however, what I have to say is quite independent of individual views on any of these subjects. It is based on the unquestioned fact that the growth of British laws, British forms of

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government, British literature and modes of thought was the slow work of centuries ; that among the co-heirs of these age-long labours were the great men who founded the United States ; and that the two branches of the English-speaking peoples, after the political separation, developed along parallel lines. So it has come about that—whether they be friendly or quarrelsome, whether they rejoice in their agreements or cultivate their differences—they can no more get rid of a certain fundamental similarity of outlook than children born of the same parents and brought up in the same home. Whether, therefore, you study political thought in Great Britain or America, in Canada or in Australia, you will find it presents the sharpest and most irreconcilable contrast to political thought in the Prussian Kingdom, or in that German Empire into which, with no modification of aims or spirit, the Prussian Kingdom has developed. Holding, as I do, that this War is essentially a struggle between these two ideals of ancient growth, I cannot doubt that, in the result of that struggle, America is no less concerned than the British Empire.

Now, if this statement, which represents the most unchanging element in my political creed, has in it any element of truth, how does it bear upon the narrower issues upon which I dwelt in the earlier portions of this interview ? In other words, what are the practical conclusions to be drawn from it ?

My own conclusions are these : If in our time any substantial effort is to be made toward ensuring the permanent triumph of the Anglo-Saxon ideal, the great communities which accept it must work together. And in working together they must bear in mind that law is not enough. Behind law there must be power. It is good that arbitration should be encouraged. It is good that the accepted practices of warfare should

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become ever more humane. It is good that before peace is broken the would-be belligerents should be compelled to discuss their differences in some congress of the nations. It is good that the security of the smaller States should be fenced round with peculiar care. But all the precautions are mere scraps of paper unless they can be enforced. We delude ourselves if we think we are doing God service merely by passing good resolutions. What is needed now, and will be needed so long as militarism is unconquered, is the machinery for enforcing them; and the contrivance of such a machinery will tax to its utmost the statesmanship of the world.

I have no contribution to make to the solution of the problem. Yet this much seems clear. If there is to be any effective sanction behind the desire of the English-speaking peoples to preserve the world's peace and the free development of the nations, that sanction must consist largely in the potential use of sea-power. For two generations and more after the last great war Britain was without a rival on the sea. During this period Belgium became a State, Greece secured her independence, the unity of Italy was achieved, the South American Republics were established, the Monroe Doctrine came into being.

To me it seems that the lesson to be drawn from history by those who love peace, freedom, and security, is not that Britain and America should be deprived, or should deprive themselves, of the maritime powers they now possess, but that, if possible, those powers should be organised in the interests of an ideal common to the two states, an ideal upon whose progressive realisation the happiness and peace of the world must largely depend.

Rt. Hon. A. J. BALFOUR

(First Lord of the Admiralty)

Message from the Admiralty, Aug. 4, 1916

THE second anniversary of the British declaration of War provides a fitting opportunity for a brief survey of the present naval situation. Public attention is inevitably concentrated upon the great military operations by which the Allies are pressing with ever-increasing severity upon the Central Powers from the East, the West, and the South; and though none of us are likely to ignore the part which the Navy plays in the campaign, it is not easy even for those who reflect much on these subjects to see things in their true perspective; for those who content themselves with the daily bulletins it is impossible. They cannot believe that anything important is done when nothing important seems to happen.

It is true that the great battle off Jutland for a moment broke the monotony of the naval situation, and its consequences, moral and material, cannot easily be overrated. An Allied diplomatist assured me that in his view it was the turning point of the War. The tide which had long ceased to help our enemies began from that moment to flow strongly in our favour. This much at least is true, that every week which has passed since the German High Seas Fleet was driven damaged into port has seen a new success for the Allies in one part or other of the field of operations.

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It would be an error, however, to suppose that the naval victory changed the situation ; what it did was to confirm it. Before Jutland, as after it, the German Fleet was imprisoned ; the battle was an attempt to break the bars and burst the confining gates ; it failed, and with its failure the High Seas Fleet sank again into impotence.

It may perhaps be objected that this is but a British view of British triumphs, and that German accounts of naval doings tell a very different story, and leave a very different impression upon the military student. But this is not so. Study the German utterances with care, and you will find that they give precisely the same general impression of British sea-power and the naval position as that which I have just expressed. It is quite true that they call that a victory which the rest of the world calls a defeat. But though they talk in German, their meaning can quite easily be expressed in intelligible English, for in essence both parties are agreed.

After all, the object of a naval battle is to obtain the command of the sea, or to keep it ; and it is certain that Germany has not obtained it, and that we have not lost it. The tests of this assertion are easy to apply. Has the grip of the British blockade relaxed since May 31 ? Has it not, on the contrary, tightened ? Is it, or is it not, becoming more difficult for the Germans to import raw material and foodstuffs ; and to pay for them by the export of their manufactures ? The Germans themselves will admit that it is becoming more difficult. Hence the violence of their invectives against Britain ; and hence their unwearied repetition of the cry that Britain is the arch enemy that must at all costs be humbled to the dust.

Again, if they felt themselves on their way to maritime equality, would they spend so much breath

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in advertising the performances of the submarine which, flying a commercial flag, carried 280 tons of German produce—to say nothing of an autograph letter of the Kaiser's—from Bremen to Baltimore? The operation itself involved no naval difficulty. Its commercial results were necessarily infinitesimal; its whole interest in German eyes lay in the fact that, by using a submarine, they could elude the barrier raised by the British Fleet between them and the outer world—a barrier which they knew their own fleet could neither break nor weaken.

But sea-power shows itself not merely in denying the waterways of the world to the enemy, but in using them for your own military purposes. And here, again, there is a singular discrepancy between German boasts about the greatness of the German Fleet and German admissions about its impotence. Since, nearly two years ago, England's "contemptible little Army" was sent into France, a steady and ever-increasing flow of men and munitions has been poured across the waters of the Channel. It has reached colossal proportions; its effects on the War may well be decisive; yet never has it been more secure from attack by enemy battleships or cruisers than it has been since the German "victory" of May 31.

But there are longer sea routes and more distant operations which in this connection it is fitting to remember. It seems that on the German anniversary of the War the German Press bade the German public take comfort from an attentive study of the map. "See," they said, "how much enemy territory, both in the East and in the West, the armies of the Fatherland occupy; see—and take heart." The amount of comfort, however, which the study of maps is capable of conveying depends partly on the maps you choose. Even the map of Europe shows an ever-shrinking

battle-line. But why look only at Europe? Germany for twenty years has advertised itself as a great colonial Power; and it was to conquer and maintain its position as a great colonial Power that German fleets were built.

Let us, then, choose a map which contains her overseas Empire. At the beginning of August, 1914, Germany possessed colonies in the China Seas, in the Malay Archipelago, in the Pacific Ocean, in West Africa, in South-west Africa, in East Africa. All have gone except the last; and the last, whilst I write, seems slipping from her grasp. The Navy has not conquered them; in the actual fighting by which they have been, or are being, acquired the Navy has taken a very important yet not the leading part. But without the British Navy to contain the German Fleet, the operations which bid fair to strip Germany of every one of her oversea possessions could not have been successful—could not even have been attempted.

Has, then, the battle of Jutland opened up the smallest prospect of Germany's regaining what she has lost? Can it give a moment's respite to the hard-pressed colonist in German East Africa? I doubt whether it has ever occurred to any German (and I am sure it has occurred to nobody else) that anything which the German Fleet has done, is doing, or can do will delay for one moment the final triumph of General Smuts over the last of Germany's oversea possessions.

If any desire yet further proof of the value which the Germans really attach to their "victorious" fleet, I advise them to study the German policy of submarine warfare. The advantage of submarine attacks on commerce is that they cannot be controlled by superior fleet-power in the same way as attacks by cruisers. The disadvantage is that they cannot be

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carried out on a large scale consistently with the laws of war or the requirements of humanity. They make, therefore, a double appeal to German militarism ; an appeal to its prudence, and an appeal to its brutality. The Germans knew their "victorious" fleet was useless ; it could be kept safe in harbour while submarine warfare went on merrily outside. They knew that submarines cannot be brought to action by battleships or battle-cruisers. They thought, therefore, that to these new commerce destroyers our merchant ships must fall an easy prey, unprotected by our ships of war and unable to protect themselves.

They are wrong in both respects ; and doubtless it is their wrath at the skill and energy with which British merchant captains and British crews have defended the lives and property under their charge that has driven the German Admiralty into their latest and stupidest act of calculated ferocity—the judicial murder of Captain Fryatt.

I do not propose to argue this case ; it is not worth arguing. Why should we do the German military authorities the injustice of supposing that they were animated by any solicitude for the principles of international law, and blundered into illegality by some unhappy accident ? Their folly was of a different kind, and flowed from a different cause. They knew quite well that when Captain Fryatt's gallantry saved his ship the Germans had sunk without warning twenty-two British merchant ships, and had attempted to sink many others. They knew that in refusing tamely to submit himself to such a fate he was doing his duty as a man of courage and of honour. They were resolved at all costs to discourage imitation !

What blunderers they are ! I doubt not their ability to manipulate machines. But of managing men, unless it be German men, they know less than

nothing. They are always wrong; and they are wrong because they always suppose that if they behave like brutes they can cow their enemies into behaving like cowards. Small is their knowledge of our merchant seamen. Their trade, indeed, is not war—they live by the arts of peace. But in no class does patriotism burn with a purer flame, or show itself in deeds of higher courage and self-devotion. I doubt whether there is one of them to be found who is not resolved to defend himself to the last against piratical attack; but if such a one there be, depend upon it he will be cured by the last exhibition of German civilisation.

And what must the neutrals think of all this? They are constantly assured by German advocates that the Central Powers are fighting for the “freedom of the seas.” It is a phrase with different meanings in different mouths; but we have now had ample opportunities of judging what it means to the Germans. It means that the German Navy is to behave at sea as the German Army behaves on land. It means that neither enemy civilians nor neutrals are to possess rights against militant Germany; that those who do not resist will be drowned, and those who do will be shot. Already 244 neutral merchant ships have been sunk in defiance of law and of humanity; the number daily grows. Mankind with now two years’ experience of war behind it has made up its mind about German culture; it is not, I think, without material for forming a judgment about German freedom.

Rt. Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

(First Lord of the Admiralty)

In the House of Commons, Nov. 27, 1914

I AM going in a few words, if the House will permit me, to draw the attention of the House, and through the House the attention of the country, to some of the larger aspects of the naval situation at the present time.

The British Navy was confronted with four main perils. There was first the peril of being surprised at the outbreak of War before we were ready and in our war stations. That was the greatest peril of all. Once the Fleet was mobilised, and at its war stations, the greatest danger by which it could be assailed had been surmounted. Then there was the danger, which we had apprehended, from the escape on to the High Seas of very large numbers of fast liners of the enemy, equipped with guns for the purpose of commerce destruction. During the last two years the sittings of the Committee of Imperial Defence have been almost unbroken, and we have been concerned almost exclusively with the study of the problems of a great European War, and I have always, on behalf of the Admiralty, pointed out the great danger which we should run if, at the outset of the War, before our cruisers were on their stations, before our means of dealing with such a menace had been fully developed, we had been confronted with a great excursion on to our trade routes of large numbers of armed liners for the purpose of commerce destruction.

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That danger has for the present been successfully surmounted. Our estimate before the War of losses in the first two or three months was at least 5 per cent. of our mercantile marine. I am glad to say that the percentage is only 1.9, and the risks have been fully covered under a system of insurance which was brought into force, the premiums on which it has been found possible steadily and regularly to reduce. The third great danger was due to mines. Our enemy have allowed themselves to pursue methods in regard to the scattering of mines on the highways of peaceful commerce which, until the outbreak of this War, we should not have thought would be practised by any civilised Power. And the risks and difficulties which we have had to face from that cause must not be underrated. But I am glad to say that, although we have suffered losses, and may, no doubt will, suffer more losses, yet I think the danger from mining, even the unscrupulous and indiscriminate mining of the open seas, is one the limits of which can now be discerned, and which can be and is being further restricted and controlled by the measures, the very extensive measures, which have been taken, and are being taken.

Fourthly, there is the danger from submarines. The submarine introduces entirely novel conditions into naval warfare. The old freedom of movement which belongs to the stronger Power is affected and restricted in narrow waters by the development of this new and formidable arm. There is a difference between military and naval anxiety, which the House will appreciate. A division of soldiers cannot be annihilated by a cavalry patrol. But at any moment a great ship, equal in war power, and as a war unit, to a division or an army, may be destroyed without a single opportunity of its fighting strength being realised, or a man on board having a chance to strike

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a blow in self-defence. Yet it is necessary for the safety of this country, it is necessary for the supply of its vital materials, that our ships should move with freedom and with hardihood through the seas on their duties, and no one can pretend that anxiety must not always be present to the minds of those who have the responsibility for their direction. It is satisfactory, however, to reflect that our power in submarines is much greater than that of our enemies, and that the only reason why we are not able to produce results on a large scale in regard to them is that we so seldom are afforded any target to attack.

Those are the four dangers. I do not include among them what some people would perhaps wish to include as a fifth, the danger of oversea invasion, although that is an enterprise full of danger—for those who might attempt it. The economic pressure upon Germany continues to develop in a healthy and satisfactory manner. My right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade published some remarkable figures yesterday upon the relative condition of British and German trade since the War. Out of 20,500,000 tons of British shipping, 20,122,000 tons are plying, or 97 per cent. of the whole, whereas out of five millions of German tonnage only 549,000 tons remain plying or unaccounted for, and of those plying it is estimated that only ten ships are at present carrying on German commerce on the sea. On the average very nearly 100 ships per day of over 300 tons burden arrive and leave the ports of the United Kingdom, and we are not only carrying on our own business effectively but we are applying special restrictions to certain vital commodities required for military purposes by the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires. The German Army depends primarily on its military matériel. The enormous supplies of all kinds of

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explosives and of all kinds of scientific apparatus directed to warlike purposes which they have prepared in times of peace gave them then, and gives them to-day, an advantage most marked in both theatres of War. But that advantage will no longer, as time passes, be wholly theirs. Gradually that advantage will change sides. We are able to draw, in virtue of sea power, from all over the world for the cause of the Allies everything that is needed to procure the most abundant flow of munitions of war which can possibly be required, and, on the other hand, the deficiency in essential commodities necessary for the waging of war is already beginning to show itself clearly marked, as far as we can discern, in our enemy's military organisation.

I see no reason at all for any discontent in regard to the protection of British commerce or the restriction which is being placed on the enemy's supplies. Risks, of course, have to be run. The great number of troops which we have had to move to and fro freely across the world, and their convoying, have involved serious risks ; and although one's eye is fixed on the mischances which have occurred in this War, knowing as I do all the circumstances and all the incidents which have occurred, I am bound to say that I think we have had a very fair share of the luck. If our enemies did not attack on the high seas on the outbreak of War or just before it, we must presume that it was because they did not consider themselves strong enough to do so ; for then would have been the moment of greatest advantage, when the dispatch of an Army to the Continent might have been prevented or delayed. If that moment was not used, it could only be because they were counting upon reducing the British Fleet, by a process of attrition, to a condition of greater equality with their own. We have been at War for four months. I should like to consider how that process

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of attrition is working. The losses of submarines have been equal, as far as we know; but the proportion of loss has been much greater to the Germans than to ourselves, because we have more than double the number of submarines in constant employment. With regard to torpedo-boat destroyers, our boats have shown their enormous superiority in gun power, which, of course, was not unknown before the War. No loss has been experienced by us, while eight or ten of the enemy's vessels have been destroyed. Of the older armoured cruisers we have lost, I think, six, and Germany has lost two. But there, again, the number of vessels of this class of which we have disposed was three or four times as great as that of our opponents, and we have of necessity to expose them more frequently and more openly to possible attacks.

But the most important class of minor vessels is that of fast modern light cruisers. The modern light cruisers which have been built from the year 1903 onwards by Great Britain and Germany, which are of good speed, fast vessels, are a most important factor in the course of the War. At the outset of the War the Germans disposed of twenty-five of these vessels, and we disposed of thirty-six. Since the War began we have lost two out of our thirty-six, or one-eighteenth of the number. The Germans have lost, or have got shut up—and I am including the *Breslau* in this calculation—practically a quarter of their modern light cruiser strength. Our Fleet has been joined since the War broke out by a number of new cruisers greater than that which our opponents have lost, so that our strength to-day is vastly greater—beyond all comparison greater—in this important arm than it was at the outset of the War. The prospects for the future are even more satisfactory, because we have an enormous delivery of cruisers rapidly approaching completion, and the

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possible cruisers which the enemy can get from all sources during the next twelve months cannot exceed half of those on which we can count.

The relative strength in "Dreadnoughts" has been so often discussed in this House before the War that it may be interesting to review it at the present time, and see how far our arguments of peace time relate to the actual facts which are now disclosed. I may say that, of course, I am giving no information which is not readily accessible to anybody who studied the published Returns of peace times. When the War broke out we mobilised thirty-one "Dreadnoughts" and "Lord Nelsons," and Germany could have had, and I presume did have—if her latest ships were ready—twenty-one "Dreadnoughts"—battleships and battle-cruisers—so we were just a little under the 60 per cent. which we had always kept before ourselves. I cannot say how many ships have joined the Fleet since. It is a matter of great importance to keep secret the number of vessels which at any one moment are available with the Flag of the Commander-in-Chief, and it is the duty of every Englishman, every British subject, and every friend of our country, to do his utmost to wrap that fact in secrecy and mystery. Although, however, I cannot tell the number of ships which have joined the flag since the declaration of War, I can say, firstly, that the relative strength of the Fleet is substantially greater now than it was at the outbreak of the War; and, secondly, I can indicate the reinforcement which both countries will receive between now and the end of 1915. The maximum reinforcement which Germany can receive—it is not possible by any human agency to add to these numbers in the period—is three ships on the figures I have given, the *Lützow*, the *Kronprinz*, and the *Salamis*, a Greek ship which has presumably been taken over.

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Two years ago I set up a Committee of the Admiralty to go into the whole question of the acceleration of new construction immediately after the outbreak of War, so that the greatest possible number of deliveries could be made in the shortest possible time, and very elaborate reports were furnished, and a complete system was worked out in every detail. In carrying out this system we have been aided by the patriotism and energy of the workmen in all the yards, who have strained their physical strength to the utmost, and have, by so doing, made themselves, in fact, the comrades of their fellow-citizens who are fighting in the trenches at the front. During this period—between the beginning of the War and the end of 1915—while the Germans will be receiving an accession of three ships, we shall receive the following ships: the *Agincourt* and the *Erin*, acquired from Turkey, the *Tiger*, the *Benbow*, the *Emperor of India*, the *Queen Elizabeth*, the *Warspite*, the *Valiant*, the *Barham*, the *Resolution*, the *Ramilies*, the *Revenge*, the *Royal Sovereign*, and the *Malaya*, and the *Ammirante Latorre*, renamed the *Canada*, that we acquired from Chili—fifteen ships in all. All these ships are, of course, of the greatest power of any vessels that have ever been constructed in naval history, and it is no exaggeration to say that we could afford to lose a super-“Dreadnought” every month for twelve months without any loss occurring to the enemy, and yet be in approximately as good a position of superiority as we were at the declaration of the War.

I hope that these facts will be of comfort to nervous people during the months that lie before us. They prove that so far as any policy of attrition is concerned the results till now—and the forecast as well as we may judge it—are not unsatisfactory to us; nor is there any attrition by wear and tear. The refits of the Fleet

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and flotillas are being regularly conducted. The health of the sailors is nearly twice as good as in time of peace. Six hundred thousand pounds have been spent by the Admiralty on warm clothing, and I have every reason to believe that the arrangements are thoroughly satisfactory, though, of course, if friends like to send additional comforts, arrangements are made for their reception and distribution. The sailors have received with warm gratitude the separation allowance which the Navy had always hitherto been completely denied. The conduct of the Fleet is exemplary, and any crime there is arises mainly among men who have been a long time in civil life, and who have not fully remembered the excellent precepts of their naval training. In the Grand Fleet the conduct of the men is almost perfect. The whole *personnel* of the Navy consists of a most intelligent class of skilled workmen and mechanics. They have studied fully the conditions of the War, and they follow with the closest interest the heroic struggles of our soldiers in the field, and the zeal and enthusiasm with which they are discharging their duties inspires those who lead them with the utmost confidence.

I have thought it right to offer these few remarks of a general character to the House because despondent views are prejudicial to the public interest, and ought not to be tolerated by persons in the responsible position of Members of Parliament while they are in any public situation. There is absolutely no reason whatever for nervousness, anxiety, or alarm. We are now separating for an adjournment of some weeks, which will probably be very important weeks in the history of this War. There is every reason for complete confidence in the power of the Navy to give effect to the wishes and the purposes of the State and the Empire. We have powerful Allies on the seas. The Russian

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Navy is developing in strength; the French Navy has complete command of the Mediterranean, and the Japanese Navy has effective command of the Pacific, and the utmost cordiality characterises the working of the Admiralties of the four countries. But even if we were single-handed, as we were in the days of the Napoleonic Wars, we should have no reason to despair of our capacity—no doubt we should suffer discomfort and privation and loss—but we should have no reason to despair of our capacity to go on indefinitely, drawing our supplies from wherever we needed them, and transporting our troops wherever we required them, and to continue this process with a strength which would grow stronger with each month the War continued until, in the end, and perhaps not at any very distant date, the purposes for which we are fighting are achieved.

Rt. Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

(First Lord of the Admiralty)

In the House of Commons, Feb. 15, 1915

AFTER the outbreak of War my noble friend Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, had to create an Army eight or ten times as large as any previously maintained or even contemplated in this country, and the War Office has been engaged in vast processes of expansion, improvisation, and development entirely without parallel in military experience. Thanks, however, to the generous provision made so readily for the last five years by the House of Commons for the Royal Navy no such difficulties or labours have confronted the Admiralty. On the declaration of War we were able to count upon a Fleet of sufficient superiority for all our needs with a good margin for safety in vital matters, fully mobilised, placed in its war stations, supplied and equipped with every requirement down to the smallest detail that could be foreseen, with reserves of ammunition and torpedoes up to, and above, the regular standard, with ample supplies of fuel and oil, with adequate reserves of stores of all kinds, with complete systems of transport and supply, with full numbers of trained officers and men of all ratings, with a large surplus of reserved and trained men, with adequate establishments for training new men, with an immense programme of new construction rapidly maturing to reinforce the Fleet and replace

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casualties, and with a prearranged system for accelerating that new construction which has been found to yield satisfactory and even surprising results.

I would draw the attention of the House in illustration to only three particular points. First of all, ammunition. If hon. Members will run their eye along the series of figures for this Vote, in the last five or six years, and particularly during the latter years, they will see an enormous increase in the Vote. In time of peace one gets little credit for such expenditure, but in time of war we thank God it has been made. Then, sir, oil. Most pessimistic prophesies were made as to the supply of oil, but no difficulty has been found in practice in that regard. The estimates which we had formed of the quantity of oil to be consumed by the Fleet in war proved to be much larger than our actual consumption. On the other hand, there has been no difficulty whatever in buying practically any quantity of oil. No single oil ship has been interfered with on passage to this country. The price of oil to-day is substantially below what it was when I last addressed the House on this topic. Indeed we have found it possible to do what we all along wished to do, but hesitated to decide upon, on account of all the gloomy prophesies and views which were entertained—we have found it possible to convert the *Royal Sovereign* to a completely oil fuel basis, so that this ship equally with the *Queen Elizabeth* will enjoy the great advantages of liquid fuel for war purposes.

Then as to manning. No more widespread delusion existed than that, although we might build ships, we could never find men to man them. In some quarters of this country the idea was fostered that when mobilisation took place ships could not be sent fully manned to sea; but when mobilisation did take place we were able to man, as I told the House we should

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be able to, every ship in the Navy fit to send to sea. We were able to man a number of old ships which we did not intend to send to sea, but which, after being repaired and refitted, were found to have the possibility of usefulness in them. We were able to man, in addition, powerful new vessels building for foreign nations for which no provision had been made. We were able to man an enormous number—several score—of armed merchantmen which had been taken up and have played an important part in our arrangements for the control of traffic and trade. We were able to provide all the men that were necessary for the Royal Naval Air Service, which never existed three years ago, which is already making a name for itself, and which has become a considerable and formidable body. We were able to keep our training schools full to the very brim so as to prepare a continual supply of drafts for the new vessels which are coming on in such great numbers, and over and above that we were able, without injury to any of these important interests, to supply the nucleus of instructors and trained men to form the cadres of the battalions of the Royal Naval Division, which have now reached a respectable total, and which have developed an efficiency which enables them to be counted on immediately as a factor in the defence of this country, and very soon as an element in the forces which we can use overseas.

We have never been a military nation, though now we are going to take a hand in that. We have always relied for our safety on naval power, and in that respect it is not true to say we entered on this War unprepared. On the contrary, the German Army was not more ready for an offensive war on a gigantic scale than was the British Fleet for national defence. The credit for this is due to the House, which, irrespective of

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party interests, has always by overwhelming and in later years unchallengeable majorities, supported the Government and the Minister in every demand made for naval defence. Indeed, such disputes as we have had from time to time have only been concerned with the margin of superiority, and have turned on comparatively small points respecting them. For instance, we have discussed at enormous length what percentages of "Dreadnought" superiority would be available in particular months in future years, and we have argued whether the "Lord Nelsons" should be counted as "Dreadnoughts" or not. The House of Commons as a whole has a right to claim the Navy as its child, and as the unchanging object of its care and solicitude; and now after six months of war, with new dangers and new difficulties coming into view, we have every right to feel content with the results of our labour.

Since November, when I last had an opportunity of speaking to the House on naval matters, two considerable events have happened—the victory off the Falkland Islands, and the recent successful cruiser action near the Dogger Bank. Both of these events are satisfactory in themselves, but still more are they satisfactory in their consequences and significance, and I shall venture to enlarge upon them and hang the thread of my argument upon them. The victory off the Falklands terminated the first phase of the Naval War by effecting a decisive clearance of the German flag from the oceans of the world. The blocking in of the enemy's merchantmen at the very outset and the consequent frustration of his whole plans for the destruction of our commerce, the reduction of his base at Tsing-tau, the expulsion of his ships from the China Sea by Japan, the hunting down of the *Konigsberg* and the *Emden*, the latter by an Australian cruiser,

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were steps along the path to the goal finally reached when Admiral von Spee's powerful squadron, having been unsuccessfully though gallantly engaged by Admiral Cradock off Coronel, was brought to action and destroyed on December 8 by Sir Doveton Sturdee. Only two small German cruisers and two armed merchantmen remain at large of all their formidable preparations for the attack on our trade routes, and these vessels are at present in hiding. During the last three months—that is to say, since Parliament rose—on the average about 8,000 British vessels have been continuously on the sea, passing to and fro on their lawful occasions. There have been 4,465 arrivals at, and 3,600 sailings from, the ports of the United Kingdom. Only nineteen vessels have been sunk by the enemy, and only four of these vessels have been sunk by above-water craft. That is a very remarkable result to have been achieved after only a few months of war. I am sure, if we had been told before the War that such a result would be so soon achieved, and that our losses would be so small, we should not have believed it for a moment. I am quite sure, if the Noble Lord whom I see in his place (Lord Charles Beresford)—who has always felt, and quite legitimately, anxiety for the trade routes and the great difficulty of defending them—if he had been offered six months ago such a prospect, he would have said it was too good to be true.

Certainly the great sailors of the past, men of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, would have been astounded. During those two great wars, which began in 1793 and ended, after a brief interval, in 1814, 10,871 British merchant ships were captured or sunk by the enemy. Even after the decisive Battle of Trafalgar, when we had the undisputed command of the sea, so far as it can be tactically and strategically

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attained, the loss of British ships went on at a rate of over 500 ships a year. In 1806, 519 ships were sunk or captured—that is, the year after Trafalgar; in 1807, 559; in 1808, 469; in 1809, 571; and in 1810, 619. Our total losses on the high seas in the first six months of the War, including all ships other than trawlers engaged in mine-sweeping—including all ships, including losses by mines and vessels scuttled by submarines—our losses in the whole of that period are only 63. Of course, we must always be on the look-out for another attempt by the enemy to harass the trade routes. Although the oceans offer rather a bleak prospect to the German cruisers, and the experience of their consorts is not encouraging, the Admiralty must be fully prepared for that possibility, and we shall be able to meet any new efforts with advantages and resources incomparably superior to those which were at our disposal at the beginning of the War. The truth is that steam and telegraphs have enormously increased, as compared with sailing days, the thoroughness and efficiency of superior sea-power. Coaling, communications, and supplies are vital and constant needs, and once the upper hand has been lost they become operations of almost insuperable difficulty to the weaker navy. Credit is due to our outlying squadrons and to the Admiralty organisation by which they have been directed. It must never be forgotten that the situation on every sea, even the most remote, is dominated and decided by the influence of Sir John Jellicoe's Fleet—lost to view amid the northern mists, preserved by patience and seamanship in all its strength and efficiency, silent, unsleeping, and, as yet, unchallenged.

The command of the sea which we have thus enjoyed has not only enabled our trade to be carried on practically without interruption or serious disturbance,

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but we have been able to move freely about the world very large numbers of troops. I am going to give the House a figure which has no military significance because so many uncertain factors are comprised within the total, but which is an absolutely definite figure so far as the work of the Admiralty Transport Department is concerned. We have now moved by sea, at home and abroad, including wounded brought back from the front, including Belgian wounded, including Belgian and French troops, moved here and there as circumstances required, often at the shortest possible notice, with constant changes of plan, across oceans threatened by the enemy's cruisers and across channels haunted by submarines, to and fro from India and Egypt, from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, China, South Africa, from every fortress and Possession under the Crown, approximately 1,000,000 men without, up to the present, any accident or loss of life.

We are at war with the second Naval Power in the world. When complaints are made that we have taken too many transports or armed too many auxiliary cruisers, or made use of too many colliers or supply ships, I must mention that fact. The statement that the Admiralty have on charter, approximately, about one-fifth of the British Mercantile Marine tonnage is correct. With that we discharge two duties, both of importance at the present time; first, the supply, fuelling, and replenishing with ammunition of the Fleets; second, the transport of reinforcements and supply for the Army in the Field, including the return of wounded. It must be remembered in regard to the Fleet that we have no dockyard or naval port at our backs, and that the bases we are using during the War have no facilities for coaling from the shore. We are not, like the Germans, living on a great naval port at Wilhelmshaven, on which £15,000,000 or

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£16,000,000 has been spent. Rosyth is not finished, and will not be available for some time. Everything, therefore, required to keep the Fleet in being—supplies, stores, and, above all, fuel—has to be not only carried but kept afloat in ships. What are called the “afloat reserves”—the great mobile reserves of fuel and stores maintained at the various bases used by the Fleet—are those which are fixed by the War Staff and approved by the Board of Admiralty after consultation with the Commander-in-Chief. When those amounts have been fixed, the Transport Department have no choice but to supply them. It is necessary that there should be sufficient colliers to enable all the Fleet units at a particular base to coal simultaneously with a maximum rapidity twice over within a short interval, and extensive naval movements at high speed may at any moment necessitate this being put to the test. After two such coalings there must still be sufficient coal available for unforeseen contingencies, including delays in bringing further supplies through storm or foggy weather, or hostile operations leading to the closing of particular areas of water, or through the temporary suspension of coaling in South Wales, through damage to docks, railways, bridges, pits or other local causes.

We cannot possibly run any risk of having the Fleet rendered immobile. We must make assurance doubly sure. The life of the State depends upon it and it follows, having always to be ready for a great emergency, with all the Fleet steaming at once continuously for days together—having always to be ready for that, it follows that during periods of normal Fleet movements the reserves of coal are often and necessarily turned over slowly, and colliers may in consequence remain at the bases for considerable periods. That is our system. The fact, therefore, that particular vessels

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are noticed by shipowners to be kept waiting about for long periods is no sign of mismanagement or incapacity on the part of the Admiralty, but it is an indispensable precaution and method without which the Fleet could not act in a time of emergency. The position at every home coaling base, and of every ship, is telegraphed to the Admiralty nightly, and a tabulated statement is issued the same night. This statement is issued as the basis for a comprehensive daily criticism, with a view to securing the highest possible economy compatible with, and subject to, the vital exigencies of war. So much for the Fleet and its supply and its coaling.

With regard to the Army, it should be remembered that we are supplying across the sea, in the teeth of the enemy's opposition, an Army almost as large as the Grand Army of Napoleon, only vastly more complex in organisation and equipment. We are also preparing other Armies still larger in number. I do not know on what day or at what hour the Secretary of State for War will ask the Admiralty to move 20,000 or it may be 40,000 men. It may be at very short notice. He does not know, until we tell him, how we shall move them, by what route or to what ports. Plans are frequently changed on purpose at the very last moment ; it is imperative for the safety of our soldiers, and the reinforcement of our Armies, and the conduct of the War. We have at the present moment a powerful and flexible machinery which can move whole Armies with celerity wherever it is desired in a manner never before contemplated or dreamt of, and I warn the House most solemnly against allowing grounds of commercial advantage or financial economy to place any hampering restriction or impediment upon these most difficult and momentous operations. Careful and prudent administration does not stop at the outbreak

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of War. Everything in our power will be done to enforce it and avoid extravagance. We shall therefore welcome the advice of business men on points where they can help us. Gradually, as we get more and more control of the situation, higher economy in some respects may be possible, but military and naval requirements must be paramount, rough and ready although their demands often are, and they must be served fully at the cost of all other considerations. I am afraid that I cannot hold out any hope of any immediate reduction in the tonnage required by the Admiralty.

I have said that the strain in the early months of the War has been greatly diminished now by the abatement of distant convoy work, and by the clearance of the enemy's flag from the seas and oceans. There were times when, for instance, the great Australian convoy of sixty ships was crossing the Indian Ocean, or the great Canadian convoy of forty ships, with its protecting squadrons, was crossing the Atlantic, or when the regular flow of large Indian convoys of forty and fifty ships sailing in company was at its height both ways; when there were half a dozen minor expeditions being carried by the Navy, guarded and landed at different points, and supplied after landing; when there was a powerful German cruiser squadron still at large in the Pacific or the Atlantic, which had to be watched for and waited for in superior force in six or seven different parts of the world at once, and when, all the time, within a few hours' steam of our shores there was concentrated a hostile fleet which many have argued in former times was little inferior to our own; and when there was hardly a Regular soldier left at home, and before the Territorial Force and the New Armies had attained their present high efficiency and power—there were times when our

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naval resources, considerable as they are, were drawn out to their utmost limit, and when we had to use old battleships to give strength to cruiser squadrons, even at the cost of their speed, and when we had to face and to accept risks with which we did not trouble the public, and which no one would willingly seek an opportunity to share. But the victory at the Falkland Islands swept all these difficulties out of existence. It set free a large force of cruisers and battleships for all purposes; it opened the way to other operations of great interest; it enabled a much stricter control and more constant outlook to be maintained in Home waters, and it almost entirely freed the outer seas of danger. That was a memorable event, the relief and advantage of which will only be fully appreciated by those who have full knowledge of all that has taken place, and will only be fully appreciated by those who not only knew, but felt, what was going forward.

Now, I come to the battle cruiser action on the Dogger Bank. That action was not fought out, because the enemy, after abandoning their wounded consort, the *Blücher*, made good their escape into water infested by their submarines and mines. But this combat between the finest ships in both navies is of immense significance and value in the light which it throws upon rival systems of design and armament, and upon relative gunnery efficiency. It is the first test we have ever had, and, without depending too much upon it, I think it is at once important and encouraging. First of all it vindicates, so far as it goes, the theories of design, and particularly of big-gun armament, always identified with Lord Fisher. The range of the British guns was found to exceed that of the German. Although the German shell is a most formidable instrument of destruction, the bursting, smashing power of

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the heavier British projectile is decidedly greater, and—this is the great thing—our shooting is at least as good as theirs. The Navy, while always working very hard—no one except themselves knows how hard they have worked in these years—have credited the Germans with a sort of super-efficiency in gunnery, and we have always been prepared for some surprises in their system of control and accuracy of fire. But there is a feeling, after the combat of January 24, that perhaps our naval officers were too diffident in regard to their own professional skill in gunnery. Then the guns. While the Germans were building 11-inch guns we built 12-inch and 13½-inch guns. Before they advanced to the 12-inch gun we had large numbers of ships armed with the 13.5. It was said by the opposite school of naval force that a smaller gun fires faster and has a higher velocity, and therefore the greater destructive power—and Krupp is the master gunmaker of the world—and it was very right and proper to take such a possibility into consideration. Everything that we have learnt, however, so far shows that we need not at all doubt the wisdom of our policy, or the excellence of our material. The 13.5-inch gun is unequalled by any weapon yet brought on the scene. Now we have the 15-inch gun, with which the five “Queen Elizabeths” and the five “Royal Sovereigns” are all armed, coming into line, and this gun in quality equals the 13.5-inch gun, and is vastly more powerful and destructive.

There is another remarkable feature of this action to which I should like to draw the attention of the House. I mean the steaming of our ships. All the vessels engaged in this action exceeded all their previous records without exception. I wonder if the House and the public appreciate what that means. Here is a squadron of the Fleet which does not live in harbour,

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but is far away from its dockyards, and which during six months of war has been constantly at sea. All of a sudden the greatest trial is demanded of their engines, and they all excel all previous peace-time records. Can you conceive a more remarkable proof of the excellence of British machinery, of the glorious industry of the engine-room branch, or of the admirable system of repairs and refits by which the Grand Fleet is maintained from month to month, and can if need be maintained from year to year, in a state of ceaseless vigilance without exhaustion. Take the case of the *Kent* at the Falklands. The *Kent* is an old vessel. She was launched thirteen years ago and has been running ever since. The *Kent* was designed to go $23\frac{1}{2}$ knots. The *Kent* had to catch a ship which went considerably over $24\frac{1}{2}$ knots. They put a pressure and a strain on the engines much greater than is allowed in time of peace, and they drove the *Kent* 25 knots and caught the *Nuremberg* and sank her. It is my duty in this House to speak for the Navy, and the truth is that it is sound as a bell all through. I do not care where or how it may be tested; it will be found good and fit and keen and honest. It will be found to be the product of good management and organisation, of sound principle in design and strategy, of sterling workmen and faithful workmanship and careful clerks and accountants and skilful engineers, and painstaking officers and hardy tars. The great merit of Admiral Sir D. Beatty's action is that it shows us and the world that there is at present no reason to assume that, ship for ship, gun for gun, and man for man, we cannot give a very good account of ourselves. It shows that a five to four in representative ships—because the quality of the ships on either side is a very fair representation of the relative qualities of the lines of battle—the Germans did not think it prudent to engage, that they accepted

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without doubt or hesitation their inferiority, that they thought only of flight just as our men thought only of pursuit, that they were wise in the view they took, and that if they had taken any other view they would, unquestionably, have been destroyed. That is the cruel fact, which no falsehood—and many have been issued—no endeavour to sink by official *communiqués* vessels they could not stay to sink in war, would have obscured.

When, if ever, the great Fleets draw out for general battle we shall hope to bring into the line a preponderance, not only in quality, but in numbers, which will not be five to four, but will be something considerably greater than that. Therefore, we may consider this extra margin as an additional insurance against unexpected losses by mine and submarine, such as may at any moment occur in the preliminaries of a great sea battle. It is for these important reasons of test and trial that we must regard this action of the Dogger Bank as an important and, I think I may say, satisfactory event. The losses of the Navy, although small compared with the sacrifices of the Army, have been heavy. We have lost, mainly by submarine, the lives of about 5,500 officers and men, and we have killed, mainly by gun-fire, an equal number, which is, of course, a much larger proportion of the German forces engaged. We have also taken, in sea fighting, 82 officers and 934 men prisoners of war. No British naval prisoners of war have been taken in fighting at sea by the Germans. When they had the inclination they had not the opportunity, and when they had the opportunity they had not the inclination. For the loss of these precious British lives we have lived through six months of this War safely and even prosperously. We have established for the time being a command of the sea such as we

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had never expected, such as we have never known, and our ancestors had never known, at any other period of our history.

Losses have to be incurred in war, and mistakes will certainly be made from time to time. Our Navy keeps the sea; our ships are in constant movement; valuable ships run risks every day. The enemy is continually endeavouring to strike, and from time to time accidents are inevitable. How do you suppose the battle-cruiser squadron of Sir David Beatty was where it was when the action of January 24 took place? How many times is it supposed that the squadrons of the Grand Fleet, the cruiser and battle squadrons, have been patrolling and steaming through the North Sea, always exposed to risk by mine and torpedo, before at last they reaped their reward? If any mood or tendency of public opinion arises, or is fostered by the newspapers, or given countenance to in this House, which makes too much of losses, even if they are cruel losses, and even if it may be said that they are in some respects avoidable losses, even then I say you will have started on a path which, pressed to its logical conclusion, would leave our Navy cowering in its harbours, instead of ruling the seas. When I think of the great scale of our operations, the enormous target we expose, the number of ships whose movements have to be arranged for, of the novel conditions to which I have referred, it is marvellous how few have been our losses, and how great the care and vigilance exercised by the admirals afloat and by the Admiralty Staff, and it appears to me, and it will certainly be regarded by those who study this War in history, as praiseworthy in the highest degree.

The tasks which lie before us are anxious and grave. We are, it now appears to be, the object of a kind of warfare which has never before been practised by a

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civilised State. The scuttling and sinking at sight, without search or parley, of merchant ships by submarine agency is a wholly novel and unprecedented departure. It is a state of things which no one had ever contemplated before this War, and which would have been universally reprobated and repudiated before the War. But it must not be supposed because the attack is extraordinary that a good defence and a good reply cannot be made. The statutes of ancient Rome contain no provision for the punishment of parricides, but when the first offender appeared it was found that satisfactory arrangements could be made to deal with him. Losses no doubt will be incurred—of that I give full warning—but we believe that no vital injury can be done. If our traders put to sea regularly and act in the spirit of the gallant captain of the merchant ship *Laertes*, whose well-merited honour has been made public this morning, and if they take the precautions which are proper and legitimate, we expect that the losses will be confined within manageable limits, even at the outset, when the enemy must be expected to make his greatest effort to produce an impression.

All losses can, of course, be covered by resort on the part of shipowners to the Government insurance scheme, the rates of which are now one-fifth of what they were at the outbreak of War. On the other hand, the reply which we shall make will not perhaps be wholly ineffective. Germany cannot be allowed to adopt a system of open piracy and murder, or what has always hitherto been called open piracy and murder on the high seas, while remaining herself protected by the bulwark of international instruments which she has utterly repudiated and defied, and which we, much to our detriment, have respected. There are good reasons for believing that the economic pressure which

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the Navy exerts is beginning to be felt in Germany. We have to some extent restricted their imports of useful commodities like copper, petrol, rubber, nickel, manganese, antimony, which are needed for the efficient production of war materials, and for carrying on modern war on a great scale. The tone of the German Chancellor's recent remarks, and the evidences of hatred and anger against this country which are so apparent in the German Press, encourage us to believe that this restriction is proving inconvenient. We shall, of course, redouble our efforts to make it so. So far, however, we have not attempted to stop imports of food. We have not prevented neutral ships from trading direct with German ports. We have allowed German exports in neutral ships to pass unchallenged. The time has come when the enjoyment of these immunities by a State which has, as a matter of deliberate policy, placed herself outside of all international obligations must be reconsidered. A further declaration on the part of the Allied Governments will promptly be made which will have the effect for the first time of applying the full force of naval pressure to the enemy. I thank the House for the attention with which they have listened to me. The stresses and strains of this War are not imperceptible to those who are called on to bear a part in the responsibility for the direction of the tremendous and terrible events which are now taking place. They have a right to the generous and indulgent judgment and support of their fellow-countrymen, and to the good will of the House of Commons. We cannot tell what lies before us, or how soon or in what way the next great developments of the struggle will declare themselves, or what the state of Europe and the world will be at its close. But this, I think, we can already say, as far as the British Navy is concerned, that although no doubt new dangers

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and perplexities will come upon us continuously and anxiety will make its abode in our brain, yet the danger and anxiety which now are advancing upon us will not be more serious or more embarrassing than those through which we have already successfully made our way. For during the months that are to come the British Navy and the sea power which it exerts will increasingly dominate the general situation, will be the main and unfailing reserve of the Allied nations, will progressively paralyse the fighting energies of our antagonists, and will, if need be, even in default of all other favourable forces, ultimately by itself decide the issue of the War.

Field-Marshal EARL KITCHENER

(Secretary of State for War)

In the House of Lords, Nov. 26, 1914

SINCE I last addressed your Lordships on September 17 on the general military situation there have been certain important changes in the scene and scope of the operations on the Continent, and, at the risk of repeating what is already common knowledge, I think it may not be undesirable if I briefly allude to some of the salient features of the campaign since early in October.

In France the German Army was then attempting an outflanking movement to the north of the French lines, and our troops were being transferred to the left flank of the French forces in order to prevent the enemy from pushing west, and thus threatening Dunkirk and Calais. The Germans were also besieging Antwerp, and, owing to the overwhelming superiority of their heavy artillery, which had been brought into action against that place, it soon became manifest that the comparatively out-of-date fortifications of Antwerp would not be able to resist much longer; and, though the fall of the town was delayed, and the gallant Belgian garrison was safely removed by British efforts, Antwerp was occupied by the Germans on October 9. With their flank and rear thus secured, the German forces were pushed rapidly forward in considerable strength, their objective being to capture the northern coasts of France. But the delay which

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had been caused in the release of the besieging forces in front of Antwerp just gave time for Sir John French, by a bold forward movement, and by taking up an extended position from La Bassée to Dixmude, to meet this German movement and prevent the Germans from obtaining their objective.

At this period Sir John French's force was increased by an infantry and a cavalry division from England. Very severe fighting took place for several days, as the Germans, in considerably superior forces, vigorously attacked our left line of defence. As an instance, I may state that our cavalry divisions, extended for seven miles of front in trenches, threw back the fierce attacks of a whole German Army Corps for more than two days. The arrival of the Indian divisions on the scene was of great assistance to Sir John French, and with French reinforcements which were being pushed up to the front, the Germans gradually realised that their public boast of an advance to Calais resembled closely their statement with regard to Paris.

During all this time the long line from Lille to Verdun was maintained intact by our French Allies against constant attacks from the German forces. The French Army have shown the greatest tenacity and endurance, and have displayed the highest fighting qualities in thus defending their positions against any advance of the Germans. For although they have made notable advances at various points, they have never yielded up a yard of their country since I last addressed your Lordships. On our left the gallant Belgian Army held the line from Dixmude to the sea, and fought with their well-known pluck, throwing back vigorous and incessant attacks on their positions. Their fine resistance was supported with energy by the co-operation of our Fleet, which effectively shelled the German positions within range of our guns. Through the whole

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of the period I am now reviewing, the Belgian Army has been constantly led in the field by their King, who, though hard pressed, has never yet left Belgian territory, and does not intend to do so.

Sir John French's successful resistance to the German advance was maintained, notwithstanding German supports being pushed up in large numbers. At this time no fewer than eleven corps were attacking his position. At this critical period the 8th Division was dispatched to join our forces in the field, and the valuable co-operation of General Foch's armies on our left materially strengthened the British position. On November 11 a supreme effort was made by the Germans, the Prussian Guard being ordered to force its way through our lines at all costs, and to carry them by sheer weight of numbers. But this desperate attempt failed, as its predecessors had failed. General Joffre having sent up strong reinforcements, a considerable portion of the British trenches in front of Ypres was taken over by them, and the British front being thus appreciably shortened, our troops—which for over fourteen days and nights had never left the trenches, and never allowed the enemy to sustain a footing in them—have been enabled to enjoy a partial, but most certainly well-earned, rest. Several battalions of Territorial troops have joined Sir John French's forces, and have made their presence felt. Our losses, naturally, have been very heavy during such strenuous fighting, but they are slight in comparison with those inflicted on the enemy. Reinforcements have replaced our casualties, and the troops under Sir John French are now refitted, in the best of spirits, and confident of success under their leader.

There have been two other prominent changes in the military situation which I should like to bring to your Lordships' notice—the advance of Russia, and the

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entrance of Turkey into the field against the Allies. Early in October the Russian Army was massing on the line of the Vistula and San. The Germans were invading Poland from Silesia, and about October 11 had reached the neighbourhood of Warsaw. The Russian Army then took the offensive with overwhelming force, and drove the Germans back to their frontier, a distance of about 133 miles. Recently, by making use of their strategic railways and massing troops in the neighbourhood of the Fortress of Thorn, the Germans were able to bring a preponderating force to bear upon the Russian right flank on the Vistula, causing them to retire. After a hotly-contested battle the reinforced Russian troops in this neighbourhood have been able to check and defeat the Germans, with, I believe, heavier losses than they have ever sustained before. In the meantime, the Russian advance on Cracow and in the Carpathian Mountains has been uninterrupted, and has driven the Austrian forces before it.

At the end of October, without any warning, Turkey violated her neutrality by suddenly bombarding Odessa and other Black Sea ports. Previous to this she had already massed troops in order to invade Egypt, and armed Bedouins had crossed our frontier. We are now in touch with the advanced parties of the Turkish forces about thirty miles east of the Suez Canal. On the declaration of War by Turkey the Russian Armies in the Caucasus immediately took the offensive, and they are now successfully advancing on Erzeroum. Fighting is also now going on in the mountainous district in the neighbourhood of Van. The hostile action of Turkey has further induced us to send an Indian expedition against the Turkish provinces at the northern end of the Persian Gulf. This force has twice met and twice defeated the Turkish troops,

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and has occupied the important town of Basra. Active operations are also going on in South and East Africa.

This short summary of recent military events gives me the opportunity to say that the Government desire to keep back nothing from the public that cannot be utilised to advantage by our enemies. It is not always easy to decide what information may or may not be dangerous, and whenever there is any doubt we do not hesitate to prevent publication. It must be remembered that in this War our troops form part of a much larger force engaged in the same campaign, and the dissemination of news in regard to one part of the force must affect the whole. It is, therefore, the Commander-in-Chief of the whole Allied Army, General Joffre, who is the man responsible in this and every other matter connected with the operations of the Army in the field. And I feel in the strongest possible way that it is my duty loyally to co-operate with him, and to see that his wishes are carried out. Subject, however, to these considerations, I recognise that it is in the highest degree desirable that news from the front which can be circulated without detriment to the military position should be communicated to the country; and it has always been my aim, while regarding military considerations as paramount, to facilitate the circulation of all news which can be given with safety. I feel confident that the public will respond to the call that we have to make upon their patience and moderation with that grit which has always been the pride of the British nation, and will realise that such reticence as is preserved by the other combatants is imperatively demanded of them in the interests of their armies.

Your Lordships may very reasonably expect a word from me as to the preparations that are being made for prosecuting the War in addition to keeping up the

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forces we now have in the field. The difficulties with which the War Office have had to contend are many and various, but I may confidently say that they are being met and dealt with in a more satisfactory manner than I at first thought possible. We feel strongly that our soldiers have a right to be placed in the field provided with all the material of war which modern conditions demand—fully equipped as well as efficiently trained. The wastage of the fighting force naturally demands a large stock of men on which to draw, but although the number of casualties reported is heavy, our actual losses are relatively low, and it must not be forgotten that wounded officers and men returning to the front are the more valuable from having learnt the caution born of experience which adds to the qualifications of the bravest soldier who is taking part in such a campaign as this. As regards numbers, there is real need and ample room for all the men who are ready to come forward and serve their country, and when further special calls are made on the manhood of England I am confident they will be responded to—as before—in a manner and in a spirit which will ensure the prosecution of the War to its successful conclusion.

Field-Marshal EARL KITCHENER

(Secretary of State for War)

In the House of Lords, Feb. 15, 1916

THE opening of this new Session seems to offer a fitting opportunity for me to review very briefly the recent operations of war in the various theatres in which we and our Allies have been engaged. The Austro-German attack on Russia, which was proceeding when I last addressed your Lordships on the progress of the War, having been brought to a standstill in September, the German Staff at once commenced to organise a campaign against Serbia. The object of this was to extend their influence over the Balkans and to establish a railway connection between themselves and their ally, Turkey, on whom the presence of our forces in Gallipoli was having a decided effect, causing great deficiency in both men and munitions, the latter of which they looked to Germany to supply. The French and ourselves were at this time bringing considerable pressure to bear on the Western front. The operations culminated in the battles at Loos, in Champagne, as well as about Arras. Our offensive in these areas inflicted very heavy losses on the Germans, and resulted in the capture of important positions by the Allied troops. The German counter-attacks failed to recover the ground which the enemy had been compelled to yield.

Owing to this continuous offensive action on the Western front, considerable German forces were with-

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drawn from the Russian frontier, where the pressure was sensibly relaxed, enabling Russia to obtain certain successes and to hold the enemy in check. In order, however, to carry out the German agreement with Bulgaria, under which King Ferdinand pledged his country to abandon her neutrality and to co-operate with the Central Powers in an onslaught on her neighbour Serbia, the preconcerted movement against Serbia was proceeded with. In these operations the Austro-German forces which crossed the Danube on October 7 took a minor part, by holding the defending Serbian forces south of Belgrade, while the Bulgarians attacked them on their flank. To support Serbia, and to enable Greece to send troops to the assistance of her Allies under the convention which existed between the two Balkan States, the French and ourselves, on the invitation of the Greek Prime Minister, sent troops to Salonika, and entered the field against the Bulgarians in South Macedonia. The inadequate harbour accommodation and the bad railway communications through Greece and Serbia hampered the advance of our troops very considerably, and it was not until October 25 that a French force came into contact with the Bulgarians in the Strumnitza Valley. It was evident that the Serbian Army was not in a position to offer effective resistance to attack by superior forces in front and flank, and could not but be driven back upon Montenegro and Albania. The Austro-Germans and Bulgarians thus succeeded in securing the way for direct communication between the Central Powers and Constantinople, which was, no doubt, their principal objective in these operations. I may add, however, that under the auspices of the French, large numbers of the Serbian Army are being reorganised and reconstituted as a fighting force in the island of Corfu.

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In France and Flanders, since the capture of Loos and the forward movement in Champagne, the Allied lines have remained practically unchanged. Throughout the winter the moral of the French Army has been maintained at the same high level which marked it at the inception of the War, and it may certainly be said that the fighting qualities of our neighbouring Ally were never greater or more highly developed than at present. Although the Indian Division have been withdrawn from France and Flanders for service elsewhere, our forces in that theatre have been materially increased by no less than eight divisions of the New Army, and thus reinforced our troops, through the winter months, have been constantly carrying out active operations which have given no rest or respite to the enemy in front of them.

The activities of the Italian Army were conspicuous in October and November during the advance on the Isonzo, nor have their efforts since been relaxed, although the positions occupied by the enemy are so strong as to bar for the present the development of the forward movement, which the splendid courage of the Italian troops is sure eventually to push home. I had an opportunity last autumn myself of seeing the indomitable resourcefulness of the Italian Army operating in a terrain presenting the greatest difficulty. Notwithstanding the heavy blows and consequent losses which Russia suffered during the summer of 1915, and which would probably have overwhelmed any less tenacious and courageous people, her army has been thoroughly reorganised and re-equipped, her armaments have increased, and the spirit which pervades her forces is as high as at the outset of the campaign. The active co-operation of the Russian people in the manufacture of munitions of war exhibits very clearly the reality of their patriotism, and their determination to carry

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this life-and-death struggle, whatever its length, to a victorious conclusion.

The Austro-Germans having cleared the path to Constantinople of all obstructions, the political situation in the Near East was thereby greatly affected. The Turkish Army, reinforced by German supplies, was able to organise a movement of troops either against Egypt or to strengthen their forces in Mesopotamia, and at the same time were able to bring a far more powerful artillery attack to bear on our positions in Gallipoli. It was therefore decided to withdraw our troops from the peninsula to reinforce Salonika and Egypt. During the last week of December our positions at Anzac and Suvla were successfully evacuated with practically no loss. This military achievement has already been the subject of eulogy in both Houses of Parliament, and was only surpassed by the later strategic withdrawal from Cape Helles. Although when on the spot I had formed the opinion that this withdrawal could be accomplished with less loss than had been originally anticipated, the method of its execution by the competent naval and military officers in charge exceeded my most sanguine expectation. The Franco-British Forces operating in Macedonia were gradually concentrated in a strongly entrenched position surrounding the town of Salonika. Its line of defence was completed and occupied before the end of the year, and, in order to emphasise the principle of unity amongst the Allies, the supreme command of the forces at Salonika, both British and French, was placed in the hands of the French Commander-in-Chief, General Sarrail.

It will be remembered that during last winter an abortive attempt on the Suez Canal was easily brushed aside by a small British force operating in that neighbourhood. But as a more serious attempt has been

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threatened by the Turks to invade Egypt from the East, adequate preparations have been made to defend the Canal. The Turco-German influence with the religious Chief of the Senussi, on the western flank of Egypt, has succeeded in inducing the Arabs of Cyrenaica and Tripoli to assume a hostile attitude towards us in Egypt. The first attempts made by the tribes have resulted in complete failure and disaster to them, and though this movement in the western desert still causes a certain feeling of unrest, the admirable loyalty of the people of Egypt forms an effective barrier to any penetration by these raiders into the cultivated areas.

In Mesopotamia our forces at the end of September, advancing up the river Tigris, defeated the Turks at Kut-el-Amara, and pushing on after various minor engagements were at the beginning of November in a position threatening the city of Baghdad. The Turkish forces thus driven back had, however, received considerable reinforcements, and at the action of Ctesiphon on November 22 showed themselves to be in such strength as to outnumber our Expeditionary Force. A retirement from our advanced position, therefore, became necessary, and this was carried out under General Townshend's direction as far as Kut-el-Amara, a strategical point which he decided to hold until the arrival of fresh troops which were being pushed up the river under the command of General Aylmer. General Aylmer and his forces drove back small parties of Turkish troops, and reached a point twenty-three miles below Kut-el-Amara, where the Turks had entrenched themselves. The Turkish position was attacked on January 27, but proved too strong to be forced, and General Aylmer, who has been joined by General Lake, is now awaiting further reinforcements before renewing his forward movement to effect a junction with General Townshend's forces. The behaviour of the British

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and Indian troops in Mesopotamia has been one of the traditions of our Army, and the operations, which have been hampered by the worst possible weather, will, it is hoped, before long reach a satisfactory stage. General Townshend has sufficient supplies at his disposal to maintain his force for a considerable period. The operations in Mesopotamia, which have hitherto been controlled from India, will now come under the direction of the War Office.

In East Africa several small engagements have enabled us to extend our positions, and the Union Government, after their victorious campaign in South-West Africa, having offered troops for service in that country, General Smith-Dorrien was appointed to command the increased forces which it was proposed to employ there. Unhappily his health has prevented his retaining the command, which I am glad to say has been accepted by General Smuts, in whom we can have the utmost confidence in view of his varied military experience. In Cameroon the combined operations undertaken by the French and British troops have brought that country entirely under the control of the Allies. In January Jaunde was occupied, and the German garrisons were either captured or driven out of their colony. All resistance having now ceased, and the enemy's levies having laid down their arms, the campaign in Cameroon may be regarded as virtually concluded. It is greatly to the credit of General Dobell and General Aymerich, commanding the French forces, and the troops under their command that this difficult country has been satisfactorily cleared of the enemy.

At the end of the year an important change occurred in the highest command of the British forces in the field. Sir John French, on whose shoulders had rested the heavy burden of seventeen months' ceaseless

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activity in the field, having relinquished, at his own request, his post in France, was invited to assume command of the forces employed in this country, and to co-ordinate duties of first-rate importance which require the direction of a central authority. The country will feel that by his invaluable services he has placed us all under an obligation, and will rejoice at the honour conferred by the King which makes him a member of this House. Sir Douglas Haig has been entrusted with the task of conducting the operations of the British troops in the Western theatre of war, and his brilliant record and high soldierly reputation are sufficient warrant for the confidence in his success which his countrymen and our Allies all feel.

I cannot omit to mention the important measure that has recently passed your Lordships' House enabling the country to call on the services of all single men of military age. We have now some experience of the working of the voluntary group system, and we realise how seriously the numbers immediately obtainable are affected by exemptions. I would pay a tribute to the conscientious work of the advisory committees and tribunals which have been set up to deal with appeals, and I am not without hope that when these appeals have been decided the anticipated numbers of men will be obtained. Time alone will show what increase the results of appeal will give us, but I trust on a future occasion to be in a position to reassure your Lordships as to the chances of our obtaining the numbers required. I would, however, seize this opportunity of again urging on employers of labour that they should do their very best to release young men for service in the Army and replace them with older men, with women, and with men who for physical reasons have been invalided out of the Army.

In the future, as in the past, we shall have our dangers,

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our difficulties, and our anxieties in this great struggle, throughout which the splendid state of our troops at the front and the calm determination of the people at home to support them to the utmost of their ability will enable us to look forward with complete confidence to a victorious issue which shall ensure peace for this and many succeeding generations.

Rt. Hon. A. BONAR LAW

(Secretary of State for the Colonies)

At Queen's Hall, London, Aug. 4, 1916

WE have entered to-day, as this meeting reminds us, upon the third year of the most terrible struggle which has ever taken place in the world. This is the greatest War of which there is any record, not only for the number of men who are engaged in it, and for the number—terrible, alas!—who have already fallen in it, but, as the Prime Minister pointed out,* for the issues which are to be decided by it.

It is not only the greatest War, but from the point of view of our enemies, of our chief enemy in particular, it is the wickedest War that the world has ever known. The greatest crime is not, as I think, the cruelties of which we have heard. The greatest crime is the beginning of this War in itself.

In the fateful week which we all remember so well, two years ago, when peace or war was trembling in the balance, all the Powers of Europe wanted peace, I think, except one—for even Austria, whose blundering diplomacy has been a proverb for generations; even Austria, which had come to the very brink of the precipice, was moving back when the other partner plunged her in the desired place. The key to peace or war was in Berlin. The Emperor had but to whisper the word peace, and there would have been no war. He did not speak that word

*Vide page 114.

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because in their belief the hour for which there had been generations of preparation had come, and they had decided upon war. With the cold-blooded calculation that they would gain by the War, they brought all this misery upon the world, as careless of the blood even of their own people as the chess-player who sacrifices pawns to secure and win the game. The victory at which we are aiming, which we mean to secure, will be no victory at all if it does not mean this—that never again in our time or in the time of those who come after us will it be in the power of one man or a group of men to plunge the world into misery.

But though that is the chief crime, others have not been lacking. There have been other wars, perhaps, which have been marked by brutalities as great, or almost as great, but there is this distinction, that in those other wars the excesses have come from below, from men in the heat of action, while in this War they have come deliberately by instruction from above, with a view to facilitating the triumph of their arms. And there is this further—excesses in other wars have been committed sometimes by barbarians, but these excesses are all the more appalling because behind them is not only brutal force, but all the resources of invention, of science, and of intellect. They have all had the same purpose, and this latest outrage,* of which the Prime Minister has spoken, has made men of calm judgment see red, if I may say so, and hunt for some mode of immediate vengeance.

That outrage means two things. It means that they are counting, and not without reason, upon this—that the British people will never willingly compete in atrocities of that kind. But they are counting on something else. They think that this example will deter other British seamen from trying to save the lives

* *i.e.*, the Murder of Captain Fryatt.

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of those who are in their ships. How little German nature understands human nature! They will learn that that outrage will stimulate effort.

How stupid it all really is! Now that our enemy have lost, and lost for ever, the advantages which their preparation gave them, now that the toils are closing around them, their one hope of escape is disunion among the Allies, and a separate peace. By these methods they have made such an outlet—which would never have occurred in any case—impossible, for wherever the German troops have gone their footsteps have been marked by blood, and they have left behind them memories which cry aloud for victory and for vengeance.

In looking back on the two years which have passed there is much that we can look back upon with pride, and everything which enables us to look forward to the future, not with hope only, but with complete confidence. I shall not attempt to speak of all our Allies—of Belgium, who has suffered so much, of Serbia, who is awaiting the hour of the renewal of the conflict, of Italy, who has driven back finally the Austrian advance. But I should like to say a word about two of them.

Our hearts are all moved by the Russian victories. Russia is playing in this War the rôle which she has played in every war. She has often lost battles, but as Frederick the Great, who established Prussian militarism, discovered, and as Napoleon discovered later, she has never been defeated. That is not due alone to her resources and numbers; it is due also to that dogged perseverance of character through which, the more the Germans drove them back the more determined they were to come forward, and those qualities they are displaying now.

What shall I say about France? She has, next to Belgium and Serbia, borne the strain of this struggle. The soldiers have displayed all the qualities which are expected from French troops. They have shown the

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courage, the dash, and the brilliance which they have always displayed, but in their struggle in the six months before Verdun they have shown other qualities of tenacity, fixity of purpose, and of determination never to yield an inch till the victory is won, which have given them, if possible, new value in our eyes.

When this War began our enemies said, and I believe they believed, that the Oversea possessions of this Empire would drop away from us. They were mistaken. The outstanding feature of this War will always be, not the good will of the Dominions merely, but the additional strength which has come to the Mother Country. We are proud of what India has done. The loyalty in such temptations which she has shown is perhaps something of which we, as a nation, have as much reason to be proud as we have that we are the rulers of India. And our self-governing Dominions—I speak first of South Africa. One German possession, larger, I think, by far than the German Empire, has already been won by one South African General. Another German possession, twice as large as the German Empire, East Africa, is from their point of view not in a healthy condition. I happened to see yesterday a map published in South Africa, which can hardly be considered premature, on which East Africa is coloured red.

I have here messages which have come to Mr. Schreiner, the representative of South Africa, which he has asked me to read to this audience. The first is from General Botha :

“ The close of the second year of this terrible world War so unnecessarily forced on the Allies sees them now in a better position than at the beginning. This War must be prosecuted with all determination. Peace at the present time could only result in preparations for an even more appalling struggle. No lasting peace is possible without complete victory. Let us press on

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with unfailing courage, and strain every nerve to obtain our end."

The second is from General Smuts :

" On this anniversary of the declaration of War I beg to send through you a message of good cheer from the wilds of East Africa. Weak, unorganised, and unprepared, we entered most reluctantly into this struggle against the mightiest military system in history, in the faith that right is might. That faith is the only basis, not only of political liberty and ethical ideals, but also for international relations in the future. Blinded by Imperialistic visions of success, by *Realpolitik*, the great German people have turned their *Kultur*, sciences and economic organisation into instruments of wrong, crime, and ruthless disregard of common morality and Christianity. Against them are arrayed the great unseen forces of human progress. It is for us to take our stand as co-workers with this force. It is our unshakable resolve that they shall not go under, but emerge victorious in the supreme crisis of Western civilisation. Our victory will secure the highest good, not only for ourselves, but for our enemies, and if utilised in no selfish spirit may surely lead to a golden age of peace and progress."

We are proud of what Canada and Australia have done. These Commonwealths have sprung to manhood, they have become nations, and already from this War they have glorious victories behind them. The Kaiser is a great Empire-builder, but it is not his Empire which he is building. He has done more to weld the British Empire together than could have been done by generations of her sons.

I should like to say a word about the Mother Country, I think it has done something too. I think it is true to say that never in the whole course of what we may call the glorious history of our country has she played a

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better part than she has done in this War. Those who wish to know what the country has done, let them throw their minds back to what, two years ago, we could have thought it possible to do, and compare that with what has actually been done. When the War broke out our enemies expected and our Allies trusted that our Navy would play a great part. It has. For two years our sailors have kept their silent, their lonely and arduous vigil, upon which the life of this country and the fortunes of this War depended, and when the opportunity came they were glad to allow the German Fleet to win the victory of which the Prime Minister has spoken.*

Never in our history has naval supremacy been so great as in this War, and when the War is over it will be realised, as I think it is realised by our Allies to-day, that without our Navy victory would have been impossible, and that with our Navy victory will be complete.

What about our Army? Who could have foreseen—except the one man who did foresee and prepare for it—Lord Kitchener—that to-day we should have had in the field armies which even from the point of view of numbers compare with the great armies on the Continent, armies which are ready now to take a part, and a vital part, in the struggle which is still in front of us. They have been raised, most of them, from men who were not compelled, but who went of their own free will, to pay, if necessary, the last debt of duty to their country. We have now another method of securing troops, and I venture to say that, in the view of anyone who realises, as I always have done, how deep-rooted among the classes most affected by it was the terror and dislike of compulsion, perhaps the greatest credit for all that has happened is due to the fact that when compulsion was necessary the country adopted it without a murmur.

* Vide page 118.

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And what about the work at home? The Prime Minister has spoken of the holidays which are abandoned. That is only a symbol. Every class has been willing to emulate every other in willingness of sacrifice. Rich and poor, they have paid the like service to their country, and at home here the women have shown equal readiness to play their part. They are not only competing with men, they are stimulating men by their competition in the supply of munitions to help us on to victory. They have done something more than that, perhaps something harder than that. Everywhere, I am told, the women, instead of holding back the men from risking their lives, have urged, if that were necessary, their husbands, their sons, their lovers, to go forward in the service of their country. I think that without exaggeration we may say that there is nothing so marvellous, in my view, as the way in which and the rapidity with which this country has eagerly organised itself for the great struggle in which we are engaged.

The chairman said we could not see the end. Not yet, but we know that it is coming, and I wonder what at this moment is the feeling which is uppermost in our minds. If there were any of us who when war was only a name had our imaginations rather attracted by the panoply, pageantry, and glory of war, now that we know what war means we have lost that feeling. We have always been a peace-loving country. We hated war: and now that we know what war means, we hate it more than ever. What we are thinking of is not victory, though we long for that. When we see our darkened streets we think of the homes from which the light has been taken and will never return in this world. We think of the young men we see wounded and maimed. So we long for peace, and we pray for peace. But it must be peace that will give us the security of

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peace in the future, which will make us feel certain that the lives which have been laid down shall not be sacrificed in vain, and that never again will there be a possibility of the black cloud of militarism which threatened us for many years bursting again in ruin on the world.

Rt. Hon. EARL CURZON

(Member of the War Cabinet)

In the House of Lords, Dec. 19, 1916

I DO not think it necessary to say anything about the circumstances in which the change of Government has taken place. I am not one of those who regard the experiment of the Coalition Government as having been at all a failure; nor do I believe that that will be the reading of history in the future on the experiment in which several of us of both sides of the House have taken part during the last eighteen months. On the contrary, I believe that we were in many respects a very efficient Administration; and I have heard Mr. Asquith say more than once that in his long political experience he never had a seat in a more competent or efficient Cabinet than that over which he has just ceased to preside. The Coalition Government did enable men and parties who had hitherto been sharply divided, who had spent perhaps the greater part of their political life in opposing each other, to co-operate in the interests of the State. Both parties and men were united under a Prime Minister whom—and I know that I am speaking for my colleagues in the late Government on both sides—we regarded with profound respect, and whose services to the Government and to the country in the prosecution of this War appear to me to be in danger of receiving insufficient

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recognition. Nor do I think that the record of the Coalition Government is one of which they need feel ashamed. They raised armies in quality and in numbers undreamt of at any previous period of British history and unanticipated at the commencement of the War; they introduced, amid an assent which little more than a year ago would have been deemed impossible, compulsory military service in Great Britain; they retrieved the fortunes of the War in the first year of fighting and converted them into the notable and glorious victory of the Somme; they maintained intact, and they greatly added to, the strength of the Navy, which still holds command of the seas; and they paved the way, as we hope, for the victory which will ultimately be obtained.

Well, my Lords, in these circumstances it may be asked: Of what spirit or feeling is the change in the *personnel* of the Government the outcome? I hope I shall not be wrong if I state my belief that the friendly welcome which has been accorded to the present Government, not least by your Lordships' House, has been due to the conviction that a greater and more concentrated effort, a more effective and universal organisation, a more adequate and rapid use of the resources, not of ourselves alone, but of the Allied Powers in conjunction with us, are required if we are to carry the War to the successful termination that we all desire. This country, my Lords, is not merely willing to be led, but it is almost calling to be driven. No one doubts what the people of the country want. They desire the vigorous prosecution of the War; a sufficient, an ample return for all the sacrifices that they have made; reparation by the enemy for his countless and inconceivable crimes; security that these crimes shall not be repeated, and that these sacrifices shall not have been made in vain. They

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desire that the peace of Europe shall be re-established on the basis of the free and independent existence of nations, great and small; they desire, as regards ourselves, that our own country shall be free from the menace which the triumph of German arms, and still more the triumph of the German spirit, would entail. It is to carry out these intentions that the present Government has assumed office, and by its success or failure in doing so will it be judged.

Your Lordships may, perhaps, expect me to say something about the constitution, if not the composition, of the present Administration. It will not be denied that the reconstruction of the Government has been attempted on novel lines, and I expect the writers of constitutional history text-books in the future will have a good deal to say about the proceedings that occurred in December, 1916. The only times during the last 150 years of our history in which there have been Cabinets of numbers as low as ten were in the great War Administration of Mr. Pitt from 1783 to 1801, and the short-lived Administration of Mr. Perceval in 1810. Only four times in the same period has the number of the Cabinet been as low as twelve, the last occasion being the famous Administration of Mr. Disraeli in 1874. The whole of the rest of the Ministries of the past century and a half have varied in numbers—I speak of the Cabinet—from thirteen upwards, culminating in the figure, not always spoken of with reverence, of twenty-three of the Coalition Government to which some of us recently belonged. Now we have a Cabinet of five, or, as it finds itself, not infrequently in session, of four.

Public opinion will, I think, have recognised the principles upon which the Prime Minister has formed his Administration. They are three in number. The first is the concentration of executive authority in the

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hands of a small number of persons, the majority of them not holding portfolios, the object, of course, being to secure promptitude in decision and vigilance in action. The second principle has been the prominent part assigned to labour. My Lords, without labour this War cannot be won. Without the organisation of labour it cannot be effectively pursued. Labour is entitled, therefore, to a powerful voice in its direction. The third principle has been the employment of expert ability in high official positions and in important Departments, whether or not it has been previously connected with Parliamentary associations. This also is to some extent a novel departure.

My Lords, as regards the mechanism of Government, that is rapidly taking shape, and in less than a week things are in fairly good working order. Perhaps your Lordships may allow me to give you a brief explanation of the main features of the Government as it exists in the minds of those who have framed it. The supreme executive authority for the conduct of the War is, as I have explained, vested in the small Committee or body of men whose names are familiar to your Lordships. That Committee sits every day, and sometimes two or three times in the day. It is in truth, as it is called, a War Cabinet. There is no other Cabinet constituted as a body and meeting regularly under the presidency of the Prime Minister with collective responsibility for all the acts of Government. This does not, of course, mean for one moment that the members of the War Cabinet are divorced from close association with their colleagues, or that the Departments of Government not directly represented in the War Cabinet will be run on independent lines. An effective *liaison* between the two must obviously be maintained by means of conferences and meetings intended to bring about a common action and a common

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aim. Similarly as to the conduct of the War, no one would imagine for a moment that the War Cabinet can act independently or without constant and almost hourly consultation with its technical advisers.

In all matters affecting the conduct of the War by land and by sea the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir William Robertson, and the First Sea Lord, Admiral Jellicoe, are invariably in attendance. It is also obvious that there must be many occasions when the policy of the two great fighting Departments, the War Office and the Admiralty, must come under discussion, and when it can only properly be so discussed and determined in the presence of the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine an occasion when there are being discussed in the War Cabinet our relations with foreign Powers, or our dealings with our Allies on the Continent, at which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Under-Secretary of that Department should not be present. On other occasions it will be the Secretary of State for India, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the President of the Board of Trade, or the head of some other important Department who will attend. The plan adopted is really closely analogous to the plan of a body with which the noble Marquess opposite (the Marquess of Crewe) is, I am sure, very familiar—namely, the Committee of Imperial Defence. That body was set up now fifteen or twenty years ago by Mr. Balfour, and the plan upon which it has always proceeded has been a small nucleus continually replenished by Ministers coming in from other Departments when their advice was needed or their attendance required. But the essence of the arrangement as applied to the Cabinet is that these high officials of whom I speak will come when they are required, and will go when their work is completed. The one body that is

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in permanent session and is finally responsible is the War Cabinet, under the presidency of the Prime Minister.

I said just now that this was a novel arrangement. So it is. I do not say that in practice it will always be an easy arrangement to work. It is like the Government itself, somewhat in the nature of an experiment ; but I think we may count upon the public spirit and patriotism and individual self-abnegation which have characterised the inception of this venture to give it a fair chance of continuing with success. At any rate, my Lords, this tributé has been paid to the soundness of the principles upon which the Government has proceeded, that no sooner was it announced that this change had taken place in this country than the Governments of our Allies seem to have recognised the immediate necessity for a corresponding substitution of a very small executive body for the larger and old-fashioned Cabinets which had previously existed in their countries just as in ours. I do not say that they have done it in the same way or precisely on the same lines, but France and Italy, as your Lordships may have seen from the newspapers, have greatly contracted the size of their Cabinets, and I shall not be surprised if we find that a similar change takes place before very long in Russia.

Now, my Lords, I come to the problem with which the Government have to deal, and it may be stated, I think, in a very few words. We have to keep up our armies in the field and to give to our commanders in all the theatres of War—in France, Flanders, Salonika, Egypt, Mesopotamia—the men whom they require to maintain their forces at full strength and to provide for the greater work that lies before them in the future. Secondly, we have to keep or to obtain the men, and I think I may add also the women, who will give us increased supplies of food, munitions, and shipping, and

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who will maintain the essential industries of the nation. Thirdly, we have to organise our resources in manhood, material and money, so as to devote them along with our Allies, with whom I think there must be even closer co-operation and co-ordination in the future than there has been in the past, to the successful prosecution of the War.

How can these objects be attained? I do not conceal from your Lordships that far greater sacrifices will be called for from our people than any to which they have hitherto submitted; that far greater restraints upon individual conduct and personal liberty will be entailed than those to which the assent of Parliament has yet been given. We shall have within the next few months to revise many of our ideas and much of our practice. I wonder if the country has at all fully realised the extent to which the British people, the most liberty-loving, the most individualistic, and in some respects the most independent in the world, have already during the past two years parted with their traditional rights and privileges, as they would previously have described them, and handed them over to the State? Early in the War we took over the principal railways of Great Britain. We have now done the same, for reasons into which I need not enter, with the railways of Ireland. The merchant shipping of the country has now for more than a year been practically entirely under Government control. The compulsory acquisition of property has become a matter of almost daily occurrence. We are all familiar with the general and stringent control of the Press. Under the Munitions Act we were introduced to compulsory limitation of profits, compulsory arbitration, compulsory prohibition of strikes and lock-outs, and compulsory fixing of wages. I remember being responsible for introducing and explaining that Bill in your Lordships'

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House, and I confess that, making the best case for it I could, I little anticipated at the time how small the dislocation would be that the national life would have to experience, and how smoothly and with what general consent the powers would be wielded. Recently, my Lords, we have begun to control the raw materials of industry and articles of common consumption. Sugar and imported wheat are under Government control; the same is true of steel, wool, and leather. We began to ration with petrol, and I shall be very much surprised if my noble friend Lord Devonport does not before long take us a good deal further. Last night those of us who dined at clubs found no difficulty in accommodating ourselves to the modest exigencies of a three-course repast, and I have no doubt that we shall all be the better in a short time for the one meatless day in the week which I see is promised. Prices have already been arbitrarily fixed for many articles of food. Finally we took, early in the present year, the step to which I alluded a little while ago and which has worked on the whole with so much smoothness—the step of applying the principle of compulsory military service to men of military age in this country. This is only a brief, and I daresay quite an incomplete, summary of the measures of restraint to which the country has cheerfully submitted, but it gives some idea of the progress that has already been made. It began with the Liberal Government who were in power when the War commenced, it went on with the Coalition Government, and it will, I expect, find new developments and proceed with greatly accelerated speed under the Administration which is now in office.

Now, my Lords, I ask the question: Does anyone complain of this great change in the procedure and practice of our everyday life which has been brought about by the circumstances of the War? I think

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not. I remember some twenty or thirty years ago the late Sir William Harcourt uttering the remark: "We are all Socialists now." What that eminent man would have said had he lived to the present moment I can scarcely conceive. I think he would have gasped at some of the encroachments on personal liberty to which we are now contentedly submitting. But the fact is that there is no surrender of traditional convention, no sacrifice of personal comfort or convenience to which the people of this country are not ready to submit provided they can be assured that they will not be in vain.

Your Lordships will now expect me, after these general hints and indications, to pass on to some of the developments of this policy to which the new Government propose to ask the consent of Parliament and the nation. The first is in regard to shipping. There has been appointed an experienced and eminent shipowner to the post of Controller of Shipping. He sits as president of a Committee of whose operations I can speak with first-hand authority, because I have had the honour of occupying its chair for nearly a year myself, and I know, therefore, some of its labours. That Committee consists of one member of your Lordships' House, Lord Faringdon, and three other shipowners of acknowledged influence and position in the trade. We have during the past year wielded silently but without objection very large, and in some respects almost dictatorial, powers. These powers are now being regularised and placed in the hands of a chairman better qualified to perform the duties than was I. He is in consultation with his colleagues, and it would be premature to discuss the actual form which their joint recommendations will take. The two great problems are, of course, the utilisation of all available shipping to the best advantage, and

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shipbuilding, ship manufacture, so far as labour and material can be obtained, to make up the wastage. It is in contemplation by the Government to nationalise the shipping of the United Kingdom, and if this be successfully carried out, one result, I hope, among many that I need not mention will be the reduction of the extravagant freights that have in so many cases undoubtedly contributed to high prices in this country.

The second illustration that I would give is that of mines. One of the latest acts of the last Administration was to take over the South-Wales coalfields. I am not quite sure, but I think I am right in saying that when the late Government decided upon that step they had in view the extension of the proceeding over a much wider area. Anyhow, that intention is to be carried out by His Majesty's present advisers, and they propose to take over the whole of the coal mines of the country. The third illustration that I would give is that of food. The real danger, of course, in this matter is the failure of our crops, and drastic action is required to meet this deficiency. That action must be twofold in character—firstly, as affecting distribution; secondly, as affecting production. Both are likely to involve compulsory methods of a somewhat severe character. As regards distribution, it is essential that the excess consumption of the affluent should not be allowed to create a shortage for the less well-to-do. That will be the basis of the methods of distribution. As regards production, it means the utilisation of every available acre of land and all available labour for the production of food. One of the difficulties, of course, is the dearth of skilled men drawn away, sometimes taken away by the action of Government, for other spheres of work in connection with the War; but by a proper distribution it would seem that one

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skilled man working with unskilled labour under him may be able, in the case of farms, for instance, to do the work, not of one farm alone, but, by a system of co-operation, of several. In the organisation of food production your Lordships may, I am confident, if you are willing, as you will be, play a very prominent part. There is a good deal of ornamental land in this country that might be used for the production of food. Still more, there is a good deal of ornamental labour in the country that might be converted to more practical uses. I speak of the men who are concerned with what I may call the familiar amenities of country life—men who are keeping up gardens and looking after hothouses and lawns, and so on, or very likely engaged in some cases in the preservation of game. I am very well aware of the great sacrifices that have already been made by many in the position of your Lordships, and of the surrender that you have voluntarily given of so many of these amenities to which I refer; but in the months that lie before us, when every man will be required, there are some cases in which, I think, the operation can be carried further, and I feel certain of the co-operation of your Lordships with His Majesty's Government in their attempts in that direction.

But, my Lords, we must proceed much further than this. I spoke just now about organising the entire population of the country. Now, what is being done at this moment in Germany? At the very moment when she is talking of peace she is making the most stupendous efforts to prosecute the War. To find men for her Armies she is squeezing positively the last drop out of the manhood of her nation. She is compelling every man, woman, and child between the ages of sixteen and sixty to enter the service of the State. At the same time, with a callous ferocity and a brutal disregard to all international obligations

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and practice, she is driving the population of the territories which she has occupied into a compulsory serfdom in her own country. She is even trying to get an army out of Poland by offering it the illusory boon of a semi-independent kingdom. That is the nature of the challenge that we have to meet. How is it to be done ?

The problem can, I think, be stated in simple terms. Nearly a year ago we decided that, in order to maintain our Armies in the field, the nation must have complete control over all its military resources in men ; but it is impossible to take a man into the Army without taking him from some civil employment of greater or less utility, and it has been our object—an object which we are more and more perfectly attaining as time goes on—to establish such a system of recruiting as will ensure that no man is taken into the Army who is capable of rendering more useful service in industry. To complete our plan, to make our organisation of the national resources perfect, we ought to have power to see that every man who is not taken into the Army is really employed on work of national importance. At present it is only the man who is fit for military service and who has not established a claim for exemption on whom the nation has a call. The unfit man and the exempted man are surely under the same moral obligation. But the State has no means of enforcing this obligation. It is with this imperfect organisation of our industrial man-power that we are called upon to confront an enemy who is not only exercising to the full his right to levy his whole population, but in the manner that I have just described has introduced a practice, unknown hitherto to civilised warfare, of removing the civilian inhabitants of occupied territory in order to make good the shortage of labour in his own factories. We need—and I think your

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Lordships' cheers just now encourage me in the remark—we need to make a swift and effective answer to Germany's latest move; and it is surely not too much to ask of the people of this country that they should take upon themselves for a few months and as free men obligations which Germany is imposing upon herself.

As our Armies grow our need for munitions grows. But a large part of our labour for munition purposes is at present immobile. There may be a surplus in one factory and a shortage in another, but we have no power to transfer a man from one side of the street to the other. As the months go by the cost of the War increases; our purchases in neutral countries become more difficult to finance. Yet there are thousands of men occupied in industries which consume our wealth at home and do nothing for our credits abroad. But we have no power to transfer them from places where they are wasting our strength to places where they could increase it. These are the powers that we must take, and this is the organisation that we must complete. The matter is not new. It was considered in the last week or two of the life of the late Government by the War Committee of that Government upon the simultaneous but independent recommendation of the then Ministry of Munitions, the Man-Power Board, and the military members of the Army Council; and it was unanimously decided by them that the time had come for the adoption of the principle of universal national service. It was one of the first matters taken up by the present Government, and the present War Cabinet have unanimously adopted the conclusion come to by the preceding War Council. We believe that the plans we have in view will secure to every workman all that he has a right to ask should be assured to him.

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I now come to the plan, about which your Lordships will not expect me to give more on the present occasion than a general outline. In order to carry out this object it is proposed to appoint a Director of National Service, to be in charge both of the military and civil sides of universal national service. The civil and military sides of the Directorate will be entirely separate, and there will be military and civil directors responsible to the Director of National Service. The military director will be responsible for recruiting for the Army and will hand over to the War Office the recruits obtained. I need not elaborate that aspect of the case, because no substantial alteration is suggested in the methods of recruiting for military service. As regards civil service, it will be proposed that the Director of National Service shall proceed with the scheduling of industries and of service according to their essential character during the War. Certain industries will be regarded as indispensable, and the Departments concerned will indent upon the Director of National Service for the labour which they require for those services. The other services will be rationed in such matters as labour, raw material, and power. The labour thus set free from non-essential and rationed industries will be available to release potential soldiers who are at present protected from military service, and to increase the available supplies of labour. This labour will be invited to enrol as workers and to be registered as war workers on lines analogous to the existing munitions volunteers, with similar provisions as to rates of pay and separation allowances. The Government have no doubt that when it is realised how essential to the life of the nation it is that the services of every man should be put to the best use we shall secure an adequate supply of volunteers. We are taking immediate steps to secure

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by these means the men we want. We shall begin as soon as may be to classify industries and to invite the enrolment of volunteers. But if it be found impossible to get the numbers we require, we shall not hesitate to come to Parliament to ask for relief from pledges given in other circumstances and to obtain the necessary powers for rendering our plans effective. The nation is fighting for its life and is entitled to the best service of its sons and daughters.

Let me add another but not unimportant point. While the nation is making such enormous sacrifices as those to which I have referred, it is not tolerable that any section of the community should be permitted to make exceptional profits out of the sacrifices of others, and by that means actually to increase the burden which is borne by others. A good deal has already been done, as your Lordships know, to arrest unfair profiteering, as it is called, arising out of the War. But the Government have come to the conclusion that even more drastic steps will have to be taken. There are several ways of dealing with this problem. One is to annex all War profits ; the other is the cutting down of prices so as to make excessive profits impossible. The Munitions Act adopted both those expedients—90 per cent. of the profits, as your Lordships know, in the controlled firms were annexed. In addition to that, there has been a most searching revision of prices in the controlled firms and enormous reductions have been achieved. The problem is now being carefully examined by my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and others, and we hope to be able to make an announcement shortly as to the course which the Government intend to adopt. It is evident that when the nation is being asked to make further sacrifices in order to win the War the road should be cleared by action of this kind.

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I have so far dealt—not, I hope, at undue length, certainly as concisely as I could—with the domestic programme of the Government. Your Lordships may expect me, before I conclude, to say something about the military and political situation abroad. I am not one of those who believe in painting too rosy a picture of affairs. The facts and the inferences to be drawn from those facts are known to everybody. That does not mean that we ought now, or at any time, to take a gloomy view of matters, but it does mean that we ought to take a stern view of the realities of the case. You will never get the best out of the people of this country—and that is the task upon which we are engaged—by feeding them with sweetmeats or by putting blinkers across their eyes. There is no use in concealing the fact that the enemy, by his military successes, has obtained a position of vantage in some of the main and in many of the minor theatres of War. He still remains in occupation of almost the whole of Belgium and of a large portion of Northern France. He has swept the Serbians and the Montenegrins out of their country ; he has appropriated Russian Poland ; he has broken down the resistance and captured the capital of Rumania. But your Lordships must not think that he has gained all the successes even in Rumania that the words of the Imperial Chancellor, quoted in the newspapers during the last few weeks, would appear to suggest. Great felicitations have been heard as to the capture of the supplies of oil and wheat, and so on, in Rumania, but it may be of interest and of consolation to your Lordships to know that, by action which His Majesty's Government were mainly instrumental in bringing about, the whole of the oil-wells, refineries, and stocks in that part of Rumania which is now in the occupation of the Germans were destroyed before the invasion took place. Again,

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although a considerable part of Rumania is overrun by the enemy, the larger portion of the Rumanian Army is still intact, and will be re-formed for resumption of warfare in the early spring.

The most vain and futile thing would be if I were to attempt here—indeed, it would be an invidious task—to discuss the causes of Rumania's failure. It is one of the tragic incidents of the War; and really if you look at it the failure has been inherent in, or at any rate is explained by, the geographical position of that country. The only military Power which could come to the assistance of Rumania was Russia, and with energy and self-sacrifice and devotion Russia, hard pressed herself, has done what she could in those respects. But if you look at our position you will realise at once that we could not put armies into Rumania. The utmost we could do was to dispatch guns and rifles and munitions to Rumania; and, bear in mind, that they had to pursue a circuitous route thousands of miles in length, crossing the Northern Ocean to Archangel and then finding their way down by long railway tracks to Rumania in the South. The utmost we could do was to send these supplies to Rumania, to help them with loans and advances of money, as we did, and to engage the common enemy by an active offensive from our military base at Salonika. That assistance we endeavoured to the best of our ability to render. It may be said that this is a depressing picture. Yet the spectacle of the successive victories of the Central Powers over the petty States who surround them like a fringe, dramatic and overwhelming as it may appear at first sight to be, represents only a corner of the canvas. The late Lord Salisbury once told us all to acquire proportion by looking at large maps. May I suggest to your Lordships that in this War we ought to endeavour

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to take the larger view. You do not win a game at chess by sweeping the small pawns off the board ; their fate does not determine the ultimate issue of the game.

I ask your Lordships for a moment to reflect what changes in the external aspect of the War this last year has produced. Just as the first year of the War saw the failure of the main German offensive against Calais and Paris, so the second year has witnessed the practical abandonment of the offensive against Russia, at one time thought to be not only imminent but dangerous, the collapse of the Austrian offensive against Italy, the colossal and re-duplicated failure of Verdun—a failure on Germany's part which constitutes the most extraordinary tribute to the heroic vitality of our Allies and will always remain an imperishable incident in the history of the Army of France. But even more reassuring omens may, I think, be drawn from what I described almost in my opening sentences as the great and notable victories on the Somme. Now, why did I use that language ? The success of our operations there—by “our” I mean the French combined with our own—is not to be measured by the positions taken, or by the number of miles of ground recovered ; it is to be measured by the moral and material effect produced upon the two fighting forces. I distrust statistics, at any rate of casualties in war, and I say nothing about the casualties which the German Armies are alleged to have suffered, although about one thing I think there is very little doubt, and that is that they have been greatly and almost overwhelmingly superior to our own. Neither do I attach too much importance, although it is not insignificant, to the fact that since July 1 to the present date the combined armies of France and England—on the Front to which I am alluding—have taken 105,000 German prisoners, 150 heavy guns, 200 field

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guns, and 1,500 machine-guns belonging to the enemy. There have been much more important consequences than these. In these encounters, as your Lordships will hear from any General Officer or private serving at the Front, the Germans have been defeated, and the Allies have been a victorious, Army. Large forces of the German Army have been defeated, not once, but twice and thrice. The Allies have established an incontestable superiority, not merely in the fighting strength and stamina of their men, but in artillery and in the air; and the achievements of our airmen at the Front during the last five or six months constitute in reality one of the most glorious and creditable episodes of the entire War. Above all, there is irrefutable evidence, from the wholesale and voluntary surrender of Germans, from the statements made by prisoners, from the evidence of orders and papers found in the German trenches, that their moral is greatly shaken, that their forces are sick of fighting, and that many of them are hopeless of ultimate success. And when we add to this the evidence, accumulating every day, of the interior condition of Germany, the increasing strain on her resources, the depletion of her supplies, the food riots and strikes, so successfully kept out of the newspapers, the admitted hunger, amounting in some places almost to starvation, the progressive physical deterioration of her people, there is good ground for believing that the outlook is not quite so good for the Central Powers as they would have us believe, and that our attitude need not be one of despondency or alarm.

It is at this moment that Germany has come forward with offers of peace, or, rather, I cannot fairly use the word "offer," but rather let me say vague adumbrations and indications of peace. I ask your Lordships to observe what has been the course of

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events. First, there was the speech of the Imperial Chancellor in the Reichstag, which has been published in the newspapers, and upon which I shall have to comment in a few moments. Next, there was the Note to the Powers. The text of that Note has also been published in the Press, although in its official form it only reached His Majesty's Government through the American Ambassador yesterday morning. Now, what does this Note contain? I ask your Lordships' close attention to the words. First, it proclaims the "indestructible strength" of the Central Powers; it claims that Germany is not only undefeated, but undefeatable. Secondly, once again it advances the plea that Germany was constrained to take up arms for the defence of her existence and the freedom of national development. Thirdly, it avows German respect for the rights of other nations. Fourthly, it says that the Central Powers do not seek to crush or annihilate their adversaries. Fifthly, it expresses their desire to stem the flow of blood and to bring the horrors of War to an end. And finally, after this somewhat remarkable preamble, they declare that they propose even now—observe the implication of the words—"even now," in the hour of their "admitted triumph," they propose as an act of condescension to enter into peace negotiations. As to what form these negotiations should take, as to the terms that may be in the minds of Germany or her Allies, not a word has been said.

I do not comment—it would really be too cheap to do so—upon the terms of the Note which I have quoted. I say nothing about their curious history and their even more curious morality. Both may be left to explain themselves, and every man can form his own judgment of their value. Neither will I pause to discuss the motives by which this action on the

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part of the Central Powers may have been actuated. But, my Lords, as regards peace, is there a single one of the Allied Powers who would not welcome peace if it is to be a genuine peace, a lasting peace, a peace that could be secured on honourable terms, a peace that would give guarantees for the future? Is there a single Government, or statesman, or individual who does not wish to put an end to this reign of Satan which is turning half the world into a hell and wrecking the brightest prospects of mankind? But in what spirit is this proposal put forward, and from whom does it come?

Here I must turn, as I said I would just now, to the speech of the Imperial Chancellor by which it was introduced to the world. Let me read a few passages from that speech. He begins by a tribute to Field-Marshal Hindenburg :

“This unparalleled genius has made possible things which were hitherto considered impossible. And Hindenburg does not rest ; military operations progress.”

Secondly, as regards supplies, he says of Germany :

“We could have lived on our own resources, but now [after what had passed in Rumania] our safety is beyond question.”

Thirdly :

“To these great events on land heroic deeds of equal importance were added by our submarines.”

My Lords, the deeds are unquestioned ; heroism is not, perhaps, precisely the epithet we would all of us seek to apply.

Fourthly :

“The spectre of famine which our enemies intended to appear before us now pursues them without mercy.”

Fifthly, there is the familiar invocation of a Higher Power :

“Our strength has not made our ears deaf to our

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responsibility before God, before our own nation, and before humanity.”

And lastly, we have the statement that during these long and earnest years of War the Emperor has been moved by a single thought—how peace could be restored so as to safeguard Germany—not to safeguard anybody else—so as to safeguard Germany after the struggle in which she has fought victoriously.

I ask only : Is this the spirit in which your Lordships think that peace proposals should be made ? Does it hold out a reasonable prospect of inducing us to lay down our arms ? Is there any indication in the remarks of the Chancellor of the desire of those with whom he is allied to make reparation, to propose restitution, to give guarantees for the future ? No, my Lords. So far as we can judge from that speech—and it is all we have to judge by at present—the spirit which prevails in every word and line of it is the spirit of German militarism, unrepentant, arrogant, still indulging in the same travesty of facts, in the same blasphemous appeals to a Higher Power, in the same protestation of injured innocence, in the same menace and threats against the foe. While that speech was being made the Belgian deportations were going on, and an even more active resumption of submarine atrocities is being prepared. We know that the peace of God passeth all understanding. I am not sure that the same may not be said—in a different sense—of the peace which commends itself to the minds of the authors of that speech and that Note.

The first answer to this movement has already been given by the Ministers of France and Russia, and has been read by your Lordships in the newspapers. Their speeches have appeared at length. An answer is being given in another place at this moment by the Prime Minister of this country. I doubt not, my Lords, that

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it will be the desire and the intention of the Allied Powers to return a reasoned reply to the Note which has been presented to them. They will doubtless deal with the allegations which are contained in the Note and to which I have referred, and they will want to know where we stand. It is said that the Germans have formulated certain terms upon which they are prepared to negotiate, and which before long we may see. We know nothing of that. We have had no indication of it whatsoever. We only have the ominous tone of the Note itself and of the speech that accompanied it.

Let me put one more reflection before your Lordships. Let no one think for a moment that it is merely by territorial restitution or by a reversion to the *status quo ante* that the objects for which the Allies are fighting will be attained. We are fighting, it is true, to recover for Belgium, France, Russia, Serbia, and Rumania the territories which they have lost, and to secure for them reparation for their cruel wrongs. But you may restore to them all, and more than all, the losses they have experienced; you may pile indemnities upon them such as no Treasury in Europe could produce, and yet the War would have been in vain if we had no guarantees and no securities against a repetition of these things in the future. That is what we are fighting for. We are not fighting, as I sometimes see represented in German papers, to crush or to destroy Germany. Such an idea I do not believe has ever entered into the minds of a thinking human being in this country. But we are fighting to secure that the German spirit shall not crush the free progress of nations, and that the armed strength of Germany, augmented and fortified, shall not terrorise the future of mankind. We are fighting that our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren after us shall not have, in days when

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we have passed away, to go again through the experience of the years 1914 to 1917. This generation has suffered in order that the next may live, and that the next but one may be free. We are ready enough for peace when these guarantees have been secured and these objects have been attained. Until then we owe it to the hundreds of thousands of our fellow-countrymen and our Allies who have shed their blood, many of whom may at this very hour be giving up their lives for us, to be true to the trust of their splendid and uncomplaining sacrifice and to endure to the end.





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